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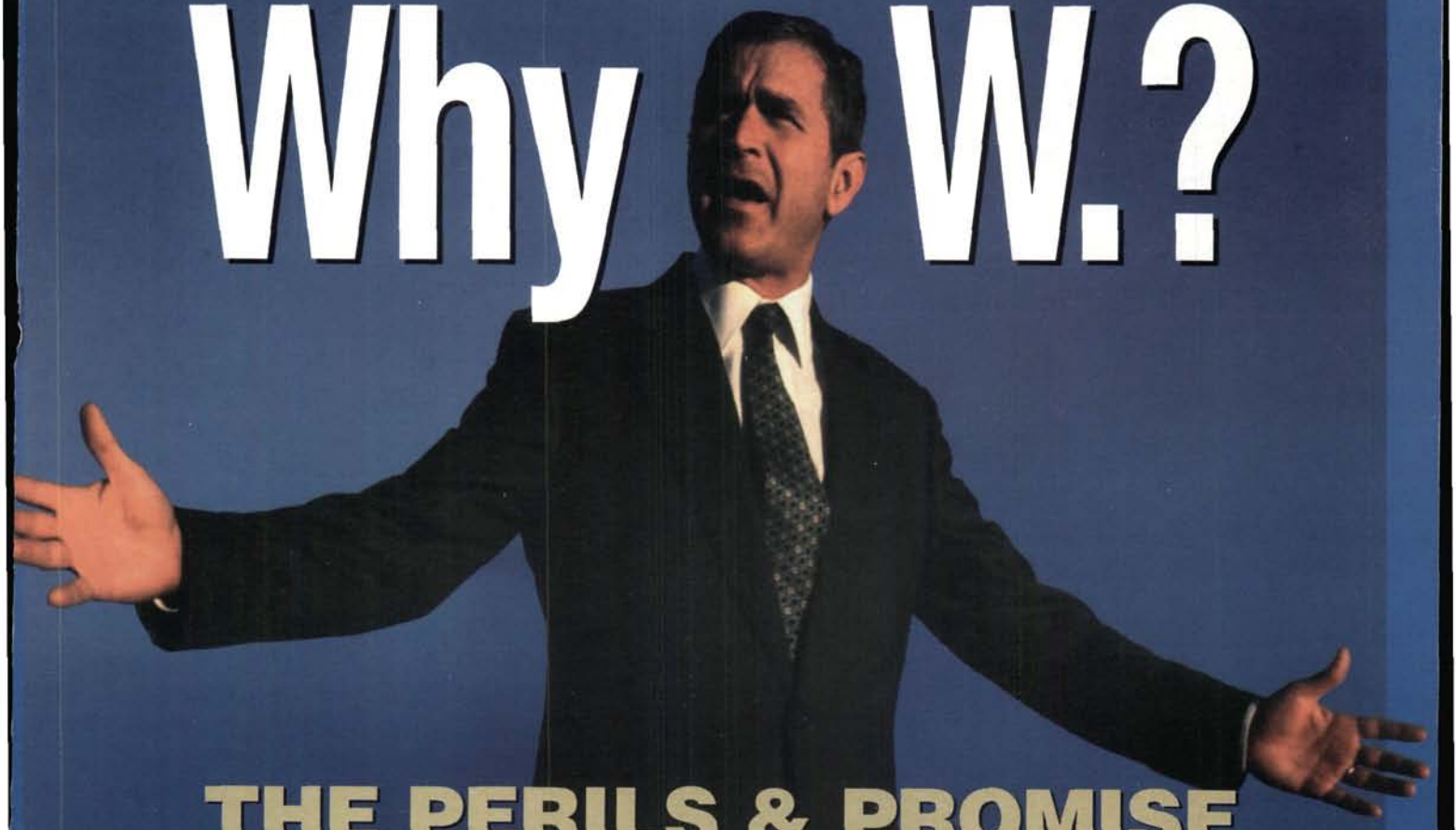
David Gress: The Mystery of WWI

NATIONAL REVIEW

Why W.?



THE PERILS & PROMISE OF THE NEW BUSH

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ELECTRICITY — WHO'LL PULL THE STRINGS?

MEET THE REGULATOR

A little-known and often unaccountable federal regulatory agency — the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) — has grandiose plans for itself. We should all be alarmed. More troubling, some members of Congress are active accomplices in this unprecedented regulatory power grab.

The blueprint for FERC's dream of empire is a 300 page proposed rule. It's been a very long time since Washington has seen regulatory empire building this brazen.

The proposed FERC rule makes good on a once fantastic boast — pronounced by then-FERC Commissioner Betsy Moler — that FERC has the authority to regulate electricity "to the toaster."

Aiding and abetting the FERC power grab are certain members of Congress who would grant FERC an array of added powers, if that's possible. For example, the just-introduced Markey-Largent omnibus bill grants FERC additional authority to fix charges, rates and terms of local electricity distribution service.

It's time for Congress to clip FERC's regulatory ambitions and turn back legislation that would only embolden the already zealous federal electricity regulators.

Unleashing a torrent of federal regulation in the name of "deregulation" dishonors the goals of consumer choice and market competition.

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■ LETTERS ■

A WAR TO REMEMBER

Kate O'Beirne's piece, "Memorial Daze" (June 28), has it all wrong. The Marines have never had an exclusive claim to Arlington Ridge. The National Park Service had always envisioned three memorials on the ridge, long before the Marines occupied their site. O'Beirne dismisses the fact that in 1994 Marine Corps commandant Carl E. Mundy Jr. was briefed by Air Force Memorial Foundation officials about plans to build a memorial on Arlington Ridge. Now, some Marines object and for the past 18 months have sought to engage the Air Force in a war of words in the press.

Further, O'Beirne characterizes an Air Force memorial as a monument "to disrespect." How can a memorial that seeks to honor the service and sacrifice of men and women in uniform be "disrespectful"? Marines, airmen, soldiers, and sailors fought together, died together, and rest in peace together at Arlington National Cemetery. Some Marines, having already been allocated a generous eight-acre portion of the 25-acre Arlington Ridge park, would now claim the remainder, depriving the Air Force Memorial Foundation the two-acre site approved by the National Capital Planning Commission in May 1995. They have apparently persuaded Kate O'Beirne that they are right and four different government agencies and two federal-court rulings are wrong.

Major General Charles Link (USAF, Ret.)
President, Air Force Memorial Foundation
Arlington, Va.

PROFESSIONALS AND AMATEURS

Apparently Richard Brookhiser harbors an intense desire to be ruled by men who have been animated by a solitary impulse since junior high school—electoral victory. His clarion call for more professional politicians in the 2000 GOP presidential field ("Amateur Hour," June 14) ignores the fact that conservatives are generally not the sort of folks who want to spend their entire lives running for office. The two modern American conservative presidential candidates, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan, were insurgents, not establishmentarians.

The current president and his cupbearer embody the extensive political experience Brookhiser yearns for (Al Gore's brief, decades-old foray into journalism notwithstanding). They, and their GOP counterparts, are motivated not by deeply held convictions, but by the desire for power. These "professionals" impose their personal search for self-affirmation on the electorate every time they stand for election to yet another office. A candidate should be judged by who he is and what he believes, not by the number of elections he has won or the number of years he has served.

Christopher Michael Griffith
Maywood, N.J.

TRULY HIGHER ED?

It's disappointing that NATIONAL REVIEW would publish an article as badly reasoned as James Bowman's diatribe against higher education ("The Graduates," May 17). His thesis is that too many young people unwittingly head to college each year; if only they realized it's too expensive and overrated, they wouldn't enroll.

It is disconcerting that a conservative would claim that the public is so ignorant. Most observers—conservatives in particular—believe that the public is perfectly capable of making rational decisions about matters that are important to them. Here's my hypothesis: People go to college because they think that doing so will improve their lives. And, as usual, they're right: Those who go to college make more money, have better jobs, are happier, healthier, and live longer than those who do not.

Bowman does make one interesting suggestion. He calls on conservatives to ". . . lead the way in hiring those who have the courage and good sense to stay out of college." Would NATIONAL REVIEW like to lead the way?

Terry W. Hartle
American Council on Education
Washington, D.C.

James Bowman's excellent article on the exaggerated payoff of a college education doesn't go far enough. Bowman notes that once socioeconomic background and intelligence are accounted for, the

(Continued on page 4)

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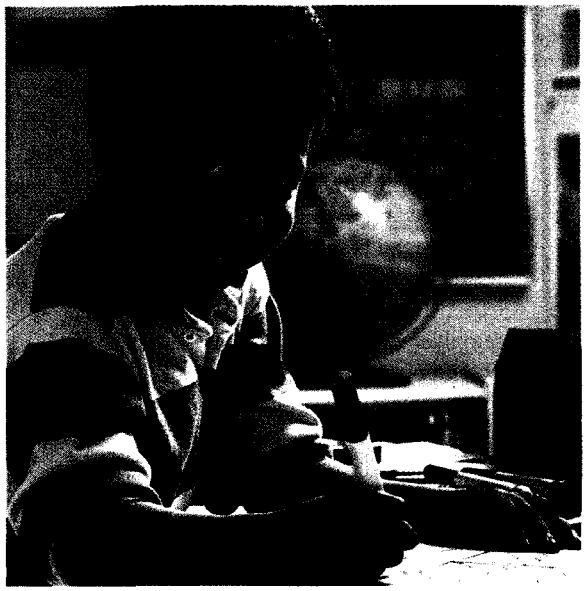

Why were the Crawfords in a hurry to get their mortgage loan approved?

For starters, they had a school bus to catch.

David and Sharon Crawford found their dream home and needed to move in before their son Luke's first day of school. But to them, that presented a problem. After all, doesn't it take several weeks to get a mortgage loan approved?

Actually, no. Because their lender used Fannie Mae's Desktop Originator® for their loan application and then used Desktop Underwriter,® their loan was approved in minutes. And they saved money, too. Which means the Crawfords not only beat the usual waiting time for mortgage approval, but they also beat the school bell. And became another example of the more than four million American home buyers who benefited last year from Fannie Mae's commitment to making it easier, faster, and more affordable for working families to buy homes of their own.

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(Continued from page 2)
apparent 76 percent wage advantage of college graduates over high-school graduates shrinks to 15 percent. This is true. But it's even worse than that. Because the universe of college graduates includes those destined for professional schools (medicine, law, and engineering, for example), the value of undergraduate education itself isn't clear. It is only a prerequisite for income-enhancing professional training. Excluding future doctors, lawyers, and engineers from the equation, the student with an undergraduate degree is no better off, on average, than he who spends a year or two learning a useful trade at a technical school, or on the job.

The college experience need not be limited to a vocational one. The life of the mind is intrinsically valuable. Unfortunately, the presence of so many students on campus whose interests are merely vocational dilutes the intellectual level at most schools. A smaller, better-qualified student body would improve education across the board and save taxpayers money.

John Hood
Raleigh, N.C.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Jonathan Adler's "Road Warriors" (June 28) neatly captures the essence of the vice president's "smart growth" and "livability" themes as new semantic packaging for old elitist planning. By limiting growth on our cities' outskirts and curtailing road construction, these policies will reduce the supply of affordable housing, hamper access to jobs, and curtail upward social mobility of young people, immigrants, and minorities. They also promise to handicap the continued growth of new high-tech cities of the South and West. The higher density Gore advocates for America's suburbs can only be achieved at the expense of all kinds of unbuilt space, especially space in people's yards. Higher density and curtailed roadbuilding are a sure formula for more traffic congestion and more air pollution, not less. The vice president's "smart growth" will prove to be profoundly unpopular once its real implications are made clear.

Adler gives some examples of good congestion relief and lifesaving road projects around the country that are being blocked with EPA help. But his lead example is off. In Alexandria, Va. the Wilson Bridge reconstruction was stopped by a local resident group unconnected with the EPA. The bridge design they stopped is an example of road-building extravagance that discredits highways, estimated to cost close to $2 billion. This is the widest bridge ever proposed anywhere, and by far the most expensive to be built without tolls, at taxpayer expense. Conservatives should not support this big-government folly on the Beltway.

Peter Samuel
Toll Roads *Newsletter*
Frederick, Md.

I thank Mr. Samuel for his kind remarks. Note, however, that I never claim the Wilson Bridge project was wisely designed or that the opposition received EPA funding—only that the activist groups involved (of which there are several) are using environmental statutes to oppose a locally desired project. —J.H.A.

BEST BOOKS CONSIDERED

I thoroughly enjoyed your "100 Best Non-Fiction Books of the Century" (May 3). I do have one bone to pick, however. Rather than a representation of the "most influential" or "most important books" of the waning century, it seems more a compendium of the panelists' favorite titles. While the most important works of Popper, Freud, T. S. Eliot, and perhaps Jacobs would turn up on most such lists, writers like Lippmann, Keegan, Foote, and Churchill—although interesting and important in their respective fields—can hardly be ranked among the greatest writers of the century. Further, some of the books listed seem to be at odds with one another. C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* on the same list as Karl Popper and E. O. Wilson? It was precisely Lewis's blind reliance on Church dogma that Popper cautioned against. Nor does Lewis's take on evolution square well with Wilson's elegant prose on the subject.

Michael Duggan
Bethesda, Md.

Leo Strauss's *Natural Right and History* is conspicuously absent from NR's list of the best non-fiction books of the century. Strauss recovered political philosophy from the ravages of relativism and historicism. His essay on Plato's *Republic* in *The City and Man* makes it quite clear that works such as Karl Popper's *Open Society and Its Enemies* seriously misinterpret Plato—Popper belongs nowhere near your list.

And *Joy of Cooking* cannot compare to any of Julia Child's fine cookbooks.

Lou Bradizza
Irving, Tex.

Your list is far superior to the one put out by the Modern Library Association, with one glaring exception: Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Despite its influence, the book has been completely discredited. The world would have been a much better place if *Silent Spring* had never been written.

Dean Clark
Tulsa, Okla.

What is John Maynard Keynes's *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* doing on NATIONAL REVIEW's list of the century's best books? Keynes's legacy has been decades of fiscal irresponsibility. What a contrast to Edward Banfield's *Unheavenly City*, which is described as "the volume that began the debunking of New Deal socialism and its public-policy consequences." *General Theory* has kept New Deal socialism alive. It is antithetical to conservative values, and by putting it on your list you give this book an authority that it does not deserve.

Steven Kates
Kingston, Australia

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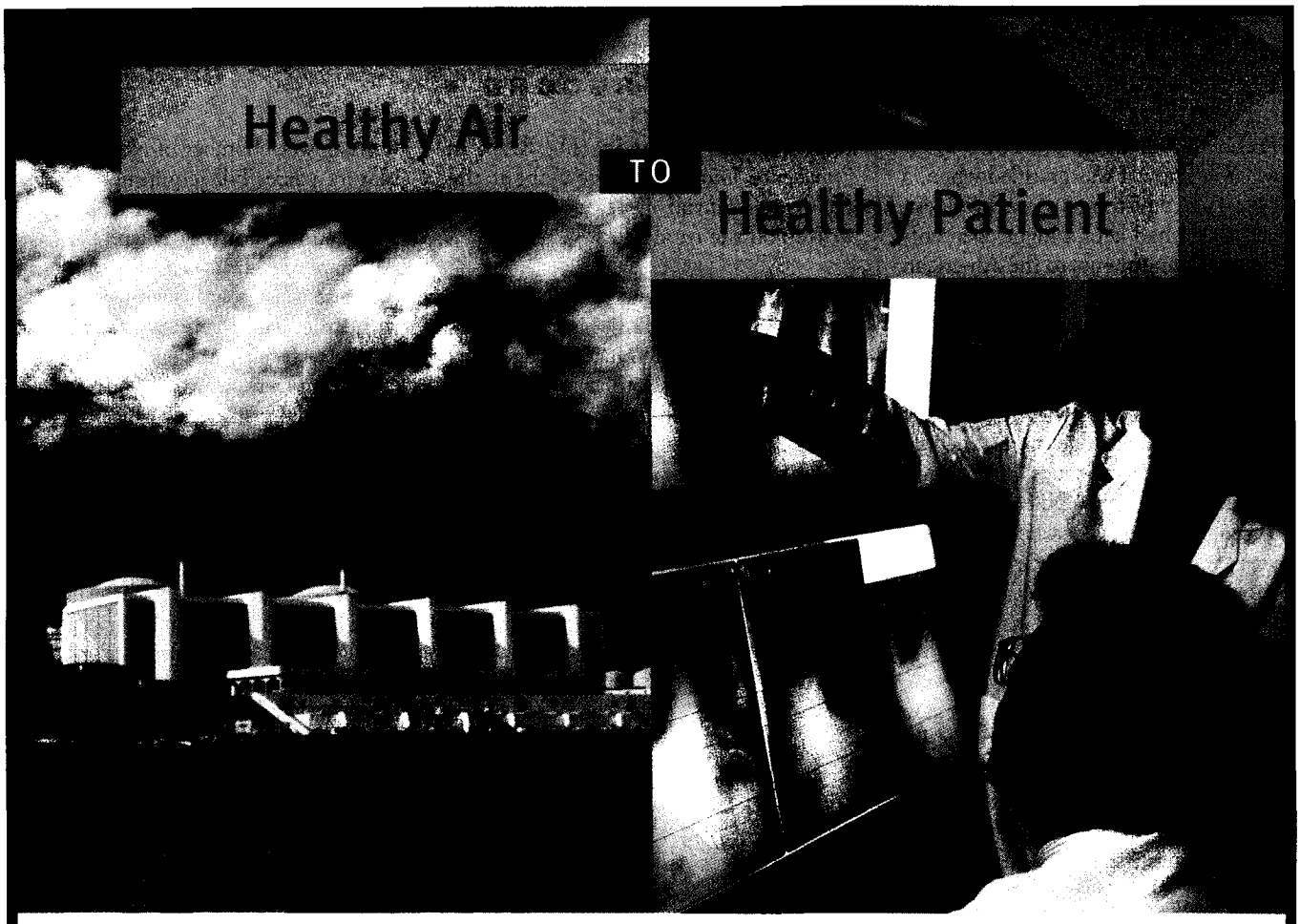

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From space exploration to food safety, nuclear technology enhances our lives in many ways. It's the same technology that enables more than 100 nuclear power plants to produce valuable electricity and help keep our air clean. That's one reason why the majority of Americans believe nuclear power—one of our cleanest sources of electricity—should continue to play an important role in our energy future.

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Bill Clinton**, in PBS interview: "You know, I was gratified when, a few years ago a historian of the presidency said that I had kept a higher percentage of my commitments to the American people than any of the last five presidents who preceded me. . . . I have been trustworthy in my public obligations to the American people, and I have been trustworthy in my dealings with them." . . . Clinton tries to rearrange travel schedule to attend Rolling Stones concert in Cologne. . . . In Paris, **Hillary Clinton** gets tough on Hollywood, criticizes movies with "space aliens who are always blowing up Washington, D.C., and the White House." . . . Hillary on *Today* show: "The fact is, I've always been a [New York] Yankees fan. . . . As a young girl [growing up in Chicago], I became very interested and enamored of the Yankees." . . . Vice president's campaign manager **Tony Coelho** on First Lady's prospective Senate run: "[Republicans] will beat up on her so much so that you're going to have a lot of women in New York and a lot of women all over the country who are going to deeply resent what they say and how they say it. And as a result of that, [we] are going to benefit as a party."

■ Al Gore promises to keep Internet "a duty-free, global free-trading zone." . . . At close of Texas legislative session, Gov. **George W. Bush** signs parental-notification bill requiring doctors to inform parents when minor-age children seek abortions. . . . Bush swings through Iowa and New Hampshire. "I've been involved in every campaign since 1964," says Sen. **Judd Gregg** (R., N.H.), observing crowds. "I've never seen this kind of energy level." . . . **Steve Forbes** begins $10 million ad campaign, hauls in $1.1 million at New York fundraiser. . . . Sen. **Orrin Hatch** (R., Utah) prepares to launch presidential bid. . . . **Pat Buchanan** aides issue no response when asked whether Buchanan would run on **Ross Perot** and **Jesse Ventura**'s Reform Party ticket, which could be worth $12.6 million in federal money for general election, if he is denied GOP nomination. . . . Virginia Republicans vote to abandon caucuses, will hold presidential primary on February 29. . . . DCCC chair Rep. **Patrick Kennedy** (D., R.I.), in *Providence Journal* interview about the 2000 presidential election: "We have written off the rural areas."

■ Junior Republicans protest Speaker **Dennis Hastert**'s ruling that term limits on House committee chairs, imposed by GOP in 1995 and set to take effect next year, won't bar chairmen from taking control of new committees or heading subcommittees currently under their jurisdiction. . . . House approves $57 billion spending bill for airport construction and air-traffic control. . . . **Scott A. Hodge** of Citizens for a Sound Economy: "Discretionary spending now far exceeds Carter-era levels." . . . Congressional Budget Office estimates that Democrats' Patient Bill of Rights would increase health-insurance premiums by as much as 6.1 percent. . . . **Ted Turner** hires former RNC chairman **Haley Barbour** to lobby for U.N. dues.

"I solemnly swear to tell the truth as I define it."

■ Hoover Institution appoints **Newt Gingrich** to distinguished visiting fellowship. . . . Delegates to American Medical Association meeting debate forming labor union. . . . U.S. Court of Appeals rules against climbers suing National Park Service over decision to close Devils Tower during religious ceremonies for American Indians, claiming they don't have standing. . . . Christian Coalition undergoes massive reorganization following loss of tax-exempt status.

■ As lower chamber of New Jersey legislature passes bill requiring students to recite part of Declaration of Independence each morning with Pledge of Allegiance, Rep. **Nia Gill** protests: "At the time these words were written, only white men, and only white men with property, were perceived to be the beneficiaries of these words." . . . In survey of high-school students by Close-Up Foundation and Prentice Hall, majority unable to name a living person who could be considered a role model. . . . Schools in Oceanside, Calif., become first in state to release test results following implementation of Proposition 227's bilingual-education ban. Officials boast of huge increases in students' math and reading scores. . . . Cleveland parents participating in school choice are more satisfied with academics and safety in their children's private schools than parents with kids in public schools, according to Harvard University study. . . . National Journalism Center offers fall scholarships, with September 3 application deadline. (For more information, call (202) 544-1333 or visit website at http://erl-njc.org.)

■ German chancellor **Gerhardt Schröder** joins Beijing in demanding more details from Washington about bombing of Chinese embassy in Belgrade. . . . Following **Yassir Arafat** statement that international community must force Israel out of Palestine just as it ended persecution of Albanians in Kosovo, Palestinian spokesman denies intent to link Palestine and Kosovo. . . . **Jesse Jackson** promises to seek release of 13 Jews held in Iran as spies. . . . U.S. intelligence report finds that Iraq, North Korea, and Russia probably store samples of deadly smallpox virus for military purposes. . . . Finance minister **Juan Camilo Restrepo** says Colombia, suffering worst recession in 50 years, will count narcotics income in official GDP figures to give them a boost.

■ Sergei Khrushchev, son of Soviet leader now living in Rhode Island and preparing to become American citizen: "I will not vote for Democrats—it's too dangerous for the country." **NR**

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THE WEEK

■ Washington, D.C., is going to have a summer curfew for teenagers—and all these years President Clinton has been free on his own recognizance.

■ The gun-control votes in the House presented a rare spectacle in Washington: The GOP outflanked Democrats on one of their pet issues. Majority whip Tom DeLay effectively muddied the Democrats' message by tapping the fearsome John Dingell, a Michigan Democrat, to sponsor an NRA-backed provision on background checks for gun-show purchases. The Dingell amendment passed, with the support of 20 percent of the Democrats, but the larger gun-control bill failed, too weak for liberals, too strong for conservatives. This left minority leader Richard Gephardt grousing about the GOP's legislative maneuvering: "They can't run a one-car funeral." But Republicans did preside over a bipartisan burial of the gun-control issue. Gephardt acknowledged as much by eschewing the term "gun control" and instead lamenting the defeat of "gun safety" measures. As in the case of "reproductive choice," Democrats have an allegedly winning issue that dare not speak its name.

■ Meanwhile, the House passed an amendment to the juvenile-crime bill that would allow states to decide whether to display the Ten Commandments in public schools and other public places. President Clinton, traveling in Germany, warned there would be "constitutional questions," but conceded that students ought to receive "character education." He might better have said "judicial questions": In 1980, the Supreme Court struck down a Kentucky law that required the posting of the Commandments in public schools. Prayers and Bible reading began in the public schools in the 1840s, when the public-school movement got going. Justices have lately been operating from the mistaken belief that the Constitution was interpreted correctly only in this generation, when the "wall of separation" between church and state was raised to the height of the Rockies. And too many legal scholars and pundits share the president's view that "character education" occurs only in an ahistorical void. All civilizations have a specific language of basic dos and don'ts. The Ten Commandments are ours. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift made the talking horses speak in disembodied ethical terms. But they are a fantasy. The Ten Commandments are Square One for American bipeds. Atheist kids can read Bertrand Russell during study hall.

■ The press has given Al Gore two somewhat contradictory missions: He has to dispel the impression that he is boring, and he has to offer specifics. He met the second test in his maiden campaign speech by offering a laundry list of policies, thus flunking the first. Actually, neither mission is particularly pressing. The American public is not so frivolous that it will reject a president for not providing enough entertainment. That's not why it rejected President Bush in 1992, and that's not why it tolerated President Clinton in 1998. No, Gore's problem is more likely to lie in the public's (probably accurate) perception that he is pedantic, arrogant, and condescending, and that his outlook and values are different from theirs. How Gore solves his image problem is not yet clear, but the outlines of his campaign are. First, take credit for peace and prosperity. Beyond that, run as a New Democrat, a Clinton clone with the advantage of a zipper-control gene. Gore will defend middle-class entitlements against budget-cutting and privatizing Republicans and advance new government programs to benefit middle-class children. So Republicans are kidding themselves if they think Gore will be easy to beat. They have not yet found a politics that works against the Clinton formula. Gore may not win if the 2000 contest is about who speaks Spanish better, but he can very well win if it's about who is the better New Democrat.

■ Following President Clinton's impeachment, Democrats predicted that the GOP would suffer at the polls for its anti-Clinton extremism. But now George W. Bush is publicly embracing impeachment and Vice President Gore feels compelled to hold Tipper's hand on national television and condemn Clinton's behavior as "inexcusable." In the case of Bush, it's about time—back when his opinion might have counted, he merely criticized Clinton's lying and called impeachment a matter for Congress. (What's next? Bush condemning U. S. Grant, or coming down harshly on Teapot Dome, or questioning the missing 18-and-a-half minutes?) The same goes for Gore, whose obnoxious cheerleading last fall made him look like the Clinton accomplice he has been. But perhaps honesty in retrospect is better than none at all.

■ Conservatives should welcome the news that Sen. Orrin Hatch may seek the GOP presidential nomination. Think about it: If Hatch buttons his high collar for duty, he will be less likely to realize his dream of being nominated to the Supreme Court. Even if Gov. Bush implodes and by some fluke the Utah senator-songwriter is elected, he will not have lifetime tenure. Run, Orrin, run!

■ House Republicans dropped all pretense of fiscal restraint when they voted recently to reauthorize the Federal Aviation

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Administration. Two-thirds of them voted for airport funding that exceeds by $14 billion the spending caps that Congress had endorsed just weeks before. The bill, which passed 316 to 110, also takes federal airport spending "off budget," so that no future constraints may interfere with lavish funding. The House's King of Pork, Republican Bud Shuster of Pennsylvania, found plenty of willing allies in the GOP leadership. Speaker Denny Hastert, majority leader Dick Armey, and GOP conference chairman J. C. Watts supported the bill. Over in the Senate, John McCain has crafted a more modest measure that holds to the spending caps. Even President Clinton has threatened to veto the House version should it reach his desk. House Republicans would be wise to cave in to the president immediately—after all, they have plenty of practice.

■ Loral Space & Communications, under fire for sharing sensitive rocket technology with China, bought a full-page ad in the major newspapers that vouched for the patriotism of its employees. The ad is about as honest as can be expected from one of Beijing's favorite satellite outfits—which is to say, not very. It claims Loral "informed U.S. officials" when it began to participate in a review of the failure of a Chinese *Long March* rocket. Actually, Loral informed only its own "Government Security Committee." The ad says the Chinese found the rocket flaw on their own. Actually, according to the Cox committee and other trustworthy sources, it is unlikely the Chinese would have identified the problem without Loral's help. Finally, the ad maintains that, according to "an independent judgment of the facts," no security violation occurred. Actually, these "outside" experts were paid for by Loral, and the Defense Department, the State Department, and the Cox committee all concur that Loral improperly improved China's rockets. The ad assures us that Loral will continue its work "with the same scrupulous attention to national security"—and that is supposed to be comforting.

■ Remember George Nethercutt, the Republican who defeated Speaker Tom Foley in the glorious Republican revolution of 1994? Nethercutt's victory was above all a victory for term limits. Foley had gone to court to block term limits; Nethercutt decried this as a betrayal of democracy and pledged over and over to limit himself to three terms in office. Well, his three terms are up, and guess what? He's running again. An outraged U.S. Term Limits, Nethercutt's patron in 1994, has just made a pledge of its own: to spend more than $1 million to defeat him. (Nethercutt so far has no Democratic opponent in his Washington district, which includes Spokane.) Once, when a press aide asked Earl Long how to explain the immediate breaking of a campaign promise, the rascally Louisiana governor barked, "Tell 'em I lied!" Nethercutt has no better answer. Terms limits may be an obnoxious political error, but dishonesty and untrustworthiness are worse. The Republican party has vowed to do "anything we can" to save Nethercutt. But no one who considers a politician as good as his word will be eager to have him stay.

■ The case for women in combat rests on the idea that women are as capable of violence and aggression as men. But with combat troops increasingly employed as peacekeepers, advocates of gender integration are shifting ground. A British-army recruiting ad depicts a woman cowering in a bombed-out building. The text reads, "She's just been raped by soldiers. The same soldiers murdered her husband. The last thing she wants to see is another soldier. Unless that soldier is a woman." Old-fashioned gender stereotypes have also come into vogue with the blue-helmet crowd. A representative of the U.N. Division for the Advancement of Women calls for a "critical mass" of women in all future peacekeeping operations, as 80 percent of refugees in need of comfort and care are women. All of this is actually a welcome return to the traditional role of women in the military. They were called nurses.

■ More than 200 members of Congress signed a letter circulated by New York Democrat Carolyn Maloney demanding that President Clinton "take all necessary steps, short of going to war," to free Lori Berenson from the Peruvian prison where she is serving a life sentence for terrorism. Berenson, an MIT drop-out, was a revolutionary tourist who schlepped from terrorist activity in El Salvador to Sandinista-ruled Nicaragua and thence to Peru, which was staggering under assault from the Shining Path and other Maoist and nihilist terror groups. There she hooked up with the Tupac Amaru, which specialized in assassination and other niceties. At her trial, she appeared with her face contorted in hatred, screaming her support for the "revolutionary movement." The government of Alberto Fujimori could not be expected to be amused. She had been part of a plot to seize the Peruvian Congress and hold its members for ransom. Our Congress should content itself with coddling criminals here at home.

■ In a May 28 letter to Princeton University president Harold Shapiro, Steve Forbes condemned the school's decision to appoint Peter Singer, infanticide advocate, to a professorship at the Center for Human Values. "The Singer appointment sends a dangerous and debilitating message that anything goes, that there are no boundaries when it comes to questions of life and death," wrote Forbes. That leaves two other prominent members of Princeton's board of trustees to take the bold step of publicly condemning postpartum baby-killing: Democratic presidential candidate Bill Bradley and Republican senator Bill Frist of Tennessee. We're waiting.

■ The Clinton administration's plans for Kosovo are roughly on track. The U.N. Security Council has not (as we had feared) impeded NATO's taking control of the province, and the refugees are flooding back. The contretemps over the Russian troop contingent is a sideshow: Moscow is chiefly interested in marching in NATO's victory parade, which is harmless. But victory has its costs. First, the KLA problem. Their reputation as crypto-Communist thugs is well deserved. Working with them to win a war is one thing; having them run Kosovo is another. NATO urgently needs a political strat-

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egy to build up democratic leaders, groups, and media to prevent a KLA monopoly. Second, much of the world views American dominance as a serious problem. The Europeans are accelerating the construction of autonomous institutions in security policy. China is taking steps to patch up its quarrel with India, reinforce its alliance with Russia, and woo Japan. And so on. The administration basks in the glow of its humanitarian intervention, but other nations still think geopolitically. Kosovo marks a departure in international relations: The new Great Game is only beginning.

■ Pope John Paul II made his eighth and longest trip to Poland. Some press accounts treated it as a farewell tour: Though buoyed by the crowds' enthusiasm, the 79-year-old pontiff needed three stitches on his head after a fall, and later ran a fever. Or perhaps it was a victory lap: His visit to Poland in 1979 sparked the Solidarity movement, which foreshadowed the 1989 collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. But John Paul II saw the trip as part of an ongoing campaign against the "rights" to abort and to die, which may be more tenacious than Communism, since they mimic, even as they pervert, the language of freedom. The Pope called them by their right names: "the slaughter of the unborn, and the procured death of the elderly and the infirm." Clearly he intends to go on, telling these truths, and ministering to the Roman Catholic faithful, until God takes him. As the Polish song says, May he live to be one hundred (at least).

■ Beijing's oppression of Catholics loyal to Rome continues apace. In April, Chinese officials, at the request of the pseudo-Catholic, state-sanctioned "Patriotic Association," ordered the destruction of 13 loyal churches—charged with being "unauthorized meeting places"—in Fujian Province. PRC goons, armed with sledgehammers and backhoes, made a particular example of St. Joseph's in Fuzhou City, a beautiful church (constructed over five years with $3 million donated by Chinese Catholics in the U.S.) that was left a pile of rubble. The assault was captured on videotape, now circulating in the United States. Bishops and leaders of religious orders such as Maryknoll—which continues to work with the "Patriotic Association"—should view the tape, come down with a massive, deserved case of guilt, and support their oppressed Chinese brethren, whose only trespass is rejecting the faith of Mao for another faith.

■ A decade ago, an art critic at the *New York Times* said German neo-expressionist Anton Henning was too derivative, asking, "Who knows what he might do with some ideas of his own?" Now we know. Henning's *Composition with Meatballs, Gherkins, Beetroot, Potatoes, Watermelon, Lemon Juice, Riesling, and Large Brownie*, on display at Frankfurt's Museum of Modern Art, features brown, egg-like shapes within an off-white border. It was painted entirely with the artist's own excrement. The work is coated in resin, eliminating possible odor problems. Henning, 35, says the title refers to the meal he ate before beginning the work. While some critics are hailing Henning's newfound originality (a "walk along a knife-edge," gushes the museum's curator), it is really just the same old . . . stuff. After employing urine, blood, and feces, what will the avant-garde turn to next? Paint?

■ A joke making the rounds: Bumper stickers in New York say, "RUN, HILLARY, RUN!" Democrats put them on their back bumpers; Republicans put them on their front bumpers.

It's Separation Time

Al hung around with Big Bad Bill
When half the world had doubts.
They tango'd like two Argentines
And lock-stepped like two krauts.
Now Al would like to separate,
But like two Siamese
Joined since Ma hit the launching pad,
Not everyone agrees.

—W. H. von Dreele

CAMPAIGN 2000

Why W.?

In his speech announcing that he would indeed run for president, Texas governor George W. Bush came out for: rebuilding "our military power," missile defense, tort reform, tax cuts, "entirely" free trade, deregulation, and letting individuals invest a portion of their Social Security taxes. Each of these ideas has powerful opponents. By embracing them, Bush refutes the charge that he is merely blurring the issues and refusing to take a stand. He says he does not want to issue "ten-point plans" just yet, and why should he? Most voters respond to candidates' themes rather than to their specific policies. Bush's immediate goal is to set an impression in the public mind.

The impression he wishes to set is, of course, that of a "compassionate conservative." As a policy, this means, mostly, letting religious charities that stress moral reform do more to combat poverty, drug abuse, and other social ills. The effectiveness of these organizations is a strong reason to increase the role of churches in social welfare at the expense of the state. The danger is that church and state will be drawn into an entangling, and potentially corrupting, alliance. In addition, it is up to conservatives to remind people that while some people will always need special help, the main way government can aid the poor is by maintaining order, creating the conditions for prosperity, and encouraging self-reliance; and all of these tasks require a certain hardheadedness. When Bush says that "not a single child should be left behind," he is indulging a utopian sentimentality antithetical to that spirit.

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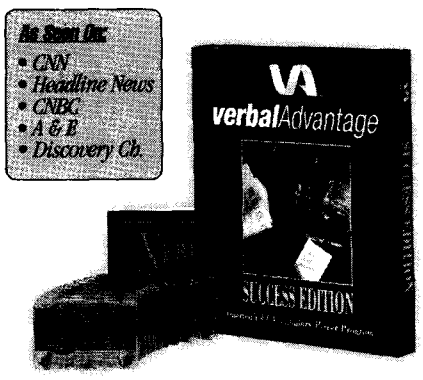

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Hardheadedness has been central to conservatives' appeal to voters, even as it exacts a cost in the perception of hard-heartedness. The limit of "compassionate conservatism," considered as a political strategy, is that it has not chiefly been the perception of indifference to the poor (or minorities) that has hobbled conservatives in recent years. Bill Clinton's political achievement has been to persuade many middle-class and even some upper-class voters that Democrats better represent their interests and values than do Republicans. By all means Bush should work on the longstanding problem of minorities' disaffection from conservatism; but this is not an answer to the more recent New Democratic challenge.

"Compassionate conservatism" is ambiguous even as a mere slogan: Is its effect to reclaim the term "compassion" from the liberals or to concede it to them? Bush's critics can be forgiven for regarding the slogan as too defensive, especially since the same is true of his campaign. Bush has an enormous lead in polls, bank accounts, and endorsements, and still he has declared his support for ethanol subsidies—a bit of pandering to Iowa voters in which his rivals Steve Forbes, John Kasich, and John McCain have refused to engage. To win the White House, Bush will have to live more dangerously than that.

These are cautions. There are also questions conservatives must ask Bush; and given the compressed primary schedule, it is reasonable to ask that he answer them by the middle of autumn. On racial preferences, for instance, Bush has said he opposes "hard quotas" but favors "affirmative access." The latter means at worst soft quotas, at best race-neutral efforts to expand the applicant pool for colleges. Or it could mean anything in between: When a federal court struck down racial preferences in the Texas university system, Bush signed a law designed to circumvent the ruling by mandating admission for the top 10 percent of each state high school's graduating class. If Bush is serious about increasing accountability, as he says, he needs to decide which side of the war on standards he is on.

Bush says he wants Republicans to welcome legal immigrants. But welcoming legal immigrants should mean welcoming them to a socially cohesive America, which requires that their numbers be reduced and that they be instructed in English and otherwise encouraged to assimilate. It also requires that young people, native-born and immigrant alike, learn the true history and founding ideals of the country rather than politically tendentious versions thereof. Is Bush willing to join that fight?

And while Bush cannot be faulted for recognizing that full legal protection for the unborn is currently unattainable, he has not made clear whether he has a strategy for achieving it eventually, beyond the enactment of such minor restrictions as a ban on partial-birth abortions. As Bush has suggested, opposition to abortion should not be a prerequisite to serving on the Supreme Court; but a president can reasonably look for the kind of judges who, whatever their own views, acknowledge that abortion on demand cannot be inferred from the Constitution. If Bush wants to overturn the constitutional abomination that is *Roe* v. *Wade*, he should give conservatives public or private assurances about his judicial-selection process. If not, they should conclude that he has no real intention either of restricting abortion or of taming the imperial judiciary.

On taxes, Bush faces a choice among conservative proposals. Many on the right will want him to advocate a broad overhaul of the tax code that eliminates breaks and lowers marginal rates, on the model of tax reforms past. Such a plan would certainly be worth supporting. But repealing tax breaks would require an enormous investment of political capital. Under the circumstances, it seems wiser for Republicans to concentrate on helping families save and invest tax-free for their retirement, health, and educational expenses through universal IRAs.

Conservative politicians have been slow to recognize the dangers to American interests of a European superstate. Too often, they have joined the larger establishment in assuming that a united Europe would be a stronger and less dependent ally—even though that Europe is being built more and more explicitly on anti-American (and protectionist) foundations. What does Bush have to say about this? Or about overthrowing the Iraqi regime and containing the Chinese one?

Can Bush speak properly in the first place? Some of his unscripted remarks have been mangled ("East Timorians"), some inscrutable, some ill considered (after a briefing by environmentalists, he told a reporter that global warming had been proven, then expressed second thoughts privately).

Finally, Gov. Bush has to distinguish himself further, from his father and from Al Gore. So far, his campaign has borne a striking resemblance to the elder Bush's 1988 campaign, with "compassionate conservatism" replacing a "kinder, gentler nation" and faith-based organizations as his "thousand points of light." Bush has taken positions sharply at odds with Gore's on issues such as Social Security. But like his father, he has avoided providing an overarching reason why voters should entrust him with the presidency. Bush cannot run to get the country moving, as Kennedy did in 1960, or to make America stronger than an adversary, as Reagan did in 1980. Nor can infusing government with effective compassion be the basis for a winning Republican presidential campaign. The most important W. question is: "Why?"

Europe Goes Delusional

Some primp like Diana the Huntress;
Berlin prefers masculine Mars.
In Paris, where Waterloo rankles,
They snub Anglo-Saxons in bars.
But where are the carriers anchored?
What satellites streak through the blue?
As euros sink low as a boa,
Most Belgians would rather make do.

—W. H. von Dreele

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40	$ 153	$ 188	$ 200	$ 298	$ 300
45	$ 200	$ 210	$ 265	$ 400	$ 415
50	$ 260	$ 313	$ 400	$ 578	$ 608
55	$ 385	$ 440	$ 600	$ 956	$ 1,065
60	$ 535	$ 690	$ 865	$ 3,140	$ 3,140
65	$ 883	$ 1,015	$ 1,733	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
70	$1,430	$ 1,637	$ 3,035	$ 5,270	$ 7,220
75	$2,797	$ 4,770	$ 6,560	$10,370	$10,370

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	$ 138	$ 163	$ 198	$ 280	$ 300
40	$ 185	$ 210	$ 260	$ 385	$ 383
45	$ 260	$ 335	$ 395	$ 548	$ 585
50	$ 378	$ 500	$ 600	$ 863	$ 915
55	$ 568	$ 758	$ 865	$ 1,805	$ 2,810
60	$ 908	$ 1,130	$ 1,365	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
65	$1,530	$ 1,845	$ 2,923	$ 5,270	$ 5,270
70	$2,665	$ 3,539	$ 5,405	$ 7,370	$10,070
75	$4,415	$ 7,848	$ 9,650	$13,640	$13,640

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HOLLYWOOD

That's Entertainment

THE Framers of the Constitution could have protected freedom of expression if they had so chosen. Instead, they protected freedom of speech. Chipmunks have expressions. What the Founders had in mind was the distinctively human faculty of reasoning through the deployment of words. The miracles of modern jurisprudence have, however, adapted the concept to cover nude dancing. The dancers at the Kitty Kat Lounge, the chairman of Time Warner, flag burners, Larry Flynt—all take shelter behind this First Amendment of a scoundrel.

A fair number of such scoundrels can be found in Hollywood, and they have been sticking to the script in the aftermath of the Littleton massacre. They believe that they frequently produce works of art that can elevate us morally and politically; but that these works can also degrade us is, they insist, categorically impossible. If pressed, they use the Bard as a human shield: Restrict *Natural Born Killers*, and Shakespeare will be next.

This is casuistry worthy of the tobacco industry, and the example may foretell an equally misguided political response to the entertainment industry. President Clinton is at the head of the parade, ordering the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission to investigate whether violent and lewd video games, movies, and albums are marketed to kids. (We'll provide the answer right now, for free: Of course they are.) Some Republicans have talked about holding moviemakers liable if their products encourage disturbed minds to commit crime. Politicians who favor the right to bear arms have naturally been eager to change the subject of post-Littleton debate from guns to "the culture."

But a legislative response is as inappropriate as it was to tobacco. (That precedent makes Republicans' enthusiasm for litigative solutions especially odd, given their antipathy to trial lawyers.) The worst defects of our popular entertainments—just for starters, their coarseness, nihilism, and stupidity—are amenable neither to measurement by social science nor to correction by law. And it is wrong to suggest that any set of enlightened laws, or for that matter any amount of cultural reform, could prevent incidents such as Littleton. Only sentimentality denies the existence of evil.

The objection to federal action here is not only a libertarian one. Traditionalists, too, should be suspicious of edicts from the central government. Their efforts are better directed closer to home. The modern deformation of the First Amendment includes the notion that it applies to state and local governments even though its explicit terms are, "Congress shall make no law . . ." Properly construed, it is no bar to local censorship. True, this may be less effective than federal censorship. But this is not altogether a bad thing. The amendment that matters here is not the First but the Tenth.

THE CONTINENT

European Colossus?

IT seems perverse, but one effect of the Kosovo war is that the Europeans now talk seriously of establishing a European defense capability so that they can act independently of the United States in future crises. Talking of such things is nothing new. Our European allies have even launched several modest initiatives to promote European defense arrangements.

But these have looked symbolic rather than real—until now. European governments had cut defense spending to the bone and showed no signs of being prepared to increase it. Also, several European NATO members—notably but not only the British—had been lukewarm about anything that might detract from NATO's central role in Western defense or weaken transatlantic ties. And NATO members not in the European Union, in particular the Turks, bitterly opposed what they saw as a needless drain on scarce resources required for NATO's real tasks.

At least one of these obstacles had begun to crumble before Kosovo. Because Tony Blair wants Britain to play a more influential role within the EU, the Brits dropped their objections and signed on to an Anglo-French declaration aimed at transforming the EU into a security as well as an economic alliance. Not long afterward, the EU appointed the retiring secretary general of NATO, Javier Solana, to be its High Representative in charge of a common EU foreign policy. Finally, President Clinton gave this developing Euro-defense a firm assist by mismanaging the Kosovo crisis on a colossal scale. It takes some skill to offend everyone, but Bill Clinton pulled it off.

"Warrior" nations like the Brits were irritated by his premature dismissal of ground troops they thought might in the end be necessary; and the pacific Germans were offended by a feckless policy of bombing without any idea of how to proceed if the bombing failed. After the experience of being led by Bill Clinton in a war, Europe has developed serious doubts about American leadership in general and wants to be at least semi-independent.

Should the U.S. be worried? After all, the Europeans would still be in NATO and subject to the alliance's disciplines. What's wrong with their using NATO structures to handle little local difficulties like Kosovo on their own? Surely it would be in the American interest for Europe to accept a greater share of the common defense burden.

All true. Unfortunately, there is still no sign that Europeans are prepared to spend more on defense, and their new cooperation takes place against a background of growing anti-Americanism in the European political class that goes well beyond doubts about Clinton. Probably, an EU defense organization would spend just enough to give it fantasies of superpower influence (and to enable it to annoy the U.S. with independent foreign-policy initiatives.) Over time this new Europe would gradually drift apart from the U.S. At a

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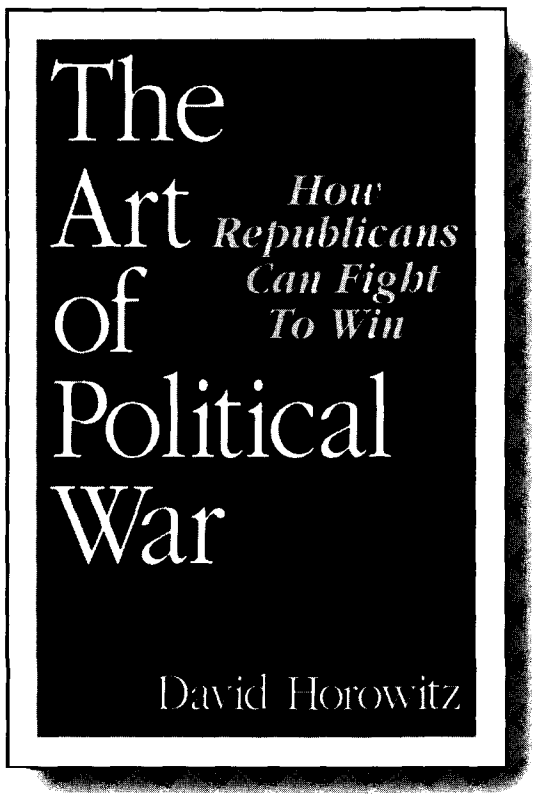
IT'S THE POLITICS, STUPID!



"Tax breaks for the wealthy on the backs of the poor" is the Democrat sound-bite that defines Republicans as mean-spirited fat cats and enemies of the poor. It is a lie that has been imprinted on the electorate through a million repetitions. It is the chant of every Democrat in Congress, every Democrat political figure, and every Democrat pundit in the media.

What is the Republican chant? *There is none.*

It's the politics, stupid!

Here is an answer to the Democrat mantra:

TAXES FOR THE BUREAUCRATS OUT OF THE POCKETS OF THE PEOPLE.

This pretty well sums up what Democrat policies are all about. If the trillions spent by the welfare state went to poor people instead of to bureaucrats, there would be no poor people; if the education billions went to the classroom and paid teachers to teach (instead of merely to show up for the job), there would be no education crisis.

Republicans have the solutions, but they need to answer Democrats slogan for slogan and attack for attack.

It's the politics, stupid!

— from *The Art of Political War* by David Horowitz

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moment when China, a resurgent Russia, and possibly an Islamic bloc were rising to challenge the West, the West would be at odds.

Supporters of a "Fortress America" might be comfortable with this outcome. Ditto supporters of a multicultural America pursuing a multilateral foreign policy. But anyone who recognizes that NATO under American leadership is a uniquely successful alliance, that it underpins the spreading "zone of stability" in Europe, and that it has just displayed (even if mistakenly) a continuing ability to defend Western interests, must regard its division and decline with foreboding.

America can act to prevent this only by subtle and indirect means—ensuring that extra defense spending goes mainly to all-NATO projects, insisting on a role for the Turks, asking the EU defense pillar to concentrate on getting new NATO entrants (such as the Czech Republic) up to military scratch, etc. More important, we should perform the EU trick in reverse and create an economic and trading organization that corresponds to NATO—a NAFTA expanded to cover the EU and the new market democracies of Central and Eastern Europe as they join the West. The West, united economically as well as militarily, could then be prepared to face any challenge that history throws at it.

GAMBLING

Know When to Fold 'Em

THE National Gambling Impact Study Commission released the results of a two-year investigation that, considering the mix of pro- and anti-gamblers in the nine-member group, and the relative newness of the issue, not surprisingly hedged its bets. The commission recommended a pause in the expansion of gambling to further assess its effects, discouraged federal taxation, and noted benefits (employment) and drawbacks (an estimated 15.4 million compulsive gamblers). The commission suggested that the gambling industry be forbidden to make political contributions, which is probably unconstitutional, and it called for restrictions on "convenience" gambling—e.g., the neighborhood video-poker machine—thus conveniently picking on the industry's weakest operators.

Gambling has become a cause of the Religious Right. James Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, who was also a member of the commission, said that after two years' study he was "even more convinced" that gambling is "a destroyer." In the 1998 elections, two southern governors supported by the Religious Right, Fob James of Alabama and David Beasley of South Carolina, lost to pro-gambling Democrats. Ah, the Democrats: casino owners, trial lawyers, and Hollywood stars—the party of the common man.

Gambling belongs, with smoking and drinking, to the category of abusable diversions. Millions lose their money and their health by their indulgence; millions more gain only pleasure. Why should a government that is not a nanny state take an interest in gambling?

Gambling is a funhouse mirror of capitalism. The virtuous bourgeois believes that if he works hard, spends wisely, and takes reasonable risks, he will do well. The gambler believes that if he takes risks, he will get rich quick. The gambling industry is a living lie about wealth creation. When the state becomes a sponsor of gambling, as in lotteries, it becomes a peddler of illusions.

Lottery tickets are a regressive tax: A poor man pays as much as a rich man for one, or a hundred. Mathematicians joke that lotteries are a stupidity tax as well, preying on those too dull-witted to assess the odds. But why should government target the credulous? That should be left to con men.

State lotteries, finally, are windfalls that table tough decisions about spending. (That is one reason southern Democrats support them.) States are not discriminating in their hunt for pots of gold: They will just as soon shake down tobacco companies as Powerball addicts. But the impulse in both cases is lazy and predatory.

The gambling commission timidly recommended that states curtail lottery advertising. They should stop running lotteries altogether. The world is full of bad things government should not prevent people from doing. But it should never be a shill.

THE ACADEMY

The Model Prisoner

THE selection by Evergreen State College of the cop-killer Mumia Abu-Jamal as commencement speaker was a shameful act.

Abu-Jamal is now the great civil-rights martyr of the radical Left. The low and dishonest all over the country are screaming for him. In 1981, as Wesley Cook, he shot and killed a Philadelphia police officer, Daniel Faulkner. After a controversial trial, he was sentenced to death. For almost 20 years, he has been the toast of death row, penning commentaries for Pacifica Radio and National Public Radio (his natural journalistic homes), basking in the support of Ed Asner, Susan Sarandon, et al., and generally achieving Che Guevara-level cult status. The "Free Mumia" movement is the hottest thing the American Left has going for it at the moment;Leonard Peltier, the Indian cop-killer, has been eclipsed.

Not a natural commencement speaker, you would think. But then, you wouldn't know the kids at Evergreen State, a public college in Washington. The commencement speaker is chosen largely by the senior class, and those students had evidently received strong doses of Mumiology. When it came time for them to pick a model to send them off into life, their choice was obvious.

On graduation day, the scene in Olympia was poignant. Daniel Faulkner's widow, Maureen Faulkner, was there, having traveled so far, bearing a photograph of her dead husband and a

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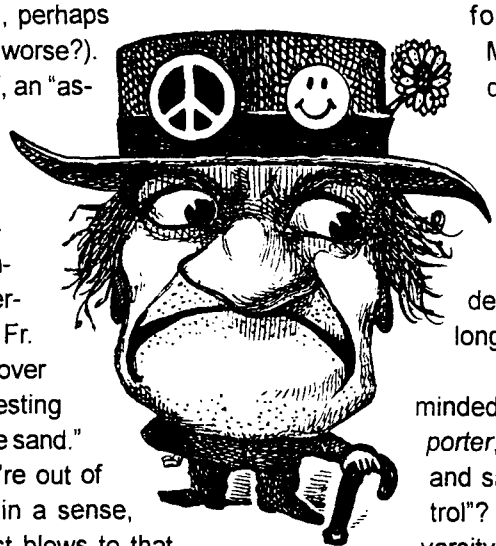
We Make Liberal Catholics ANGRY, and Not Even a Warm...

Your typical liberal Catholic hates to get angry because it's just *not nice*. But, hey, he's human too and maybe he has a right to be ticked off. After all, for over two decades now, traditional Catholicism has been resurgent, and today it's the dynamic force in the Church in the U.S. — perhaps soon to be the dominant force!

It's understandable that mod Catholics would be mad — surely they feel threatened, perhaps even irrelevant (and what could be worse?). We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, an "assertively Roman Catholic" magazine, according to Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, have certainly felt their displeasure. For example, *Commonweal*, that elderly organ of juvenile Catholicism (which is now in the "afterglow of its glory years," according to Fr. Neuhaus) recently devoted its back cover to an attempt to ridicule us, suggesting we're an "ostrich" with our "head in the sand." The gist of the attack was that we're out of touch with liberal culture — true, in a sense, though we've landed lots of honest blows to that culture's proud chin. Earlier, *Commonweal* published a letter from a homosexual claiming that we're "offensive" and "reek of fascism." Ah, that good ole "F" word, so serviceable in the salad days of the 1960s.



The National Catholic Reporter, born in the 60s and still stuck there, has nonjudgmentally accused us of "rehashing conservative dogma," taking "cheap shots" at feminism, and being a "poisoned dart," while letter-writers in the *Reporter* have sensitively demonized us as "spiteful," "abusive," "vicious," and "offensive." But then, as Fr. Neuhaus has said, the *Reporter* "languishes in the backwaters of the revolution that was not to be" and is full of "rantings."

America, the liberal Jesuit weekly, has deemed our point of view "ugly" and (of course) "offensive," while a letter-writer has accused us of "pompous quaintness" and of promoting "the real heresy today," namely, "thought-control." Another letter-writer has suggested we're "a front" for Opus Dei. To that quaintly McCarthyite reader of *America*: We do solemnly swear that we are not now and never have been a front for Opus Dei. But then, who cares what's printed by the wilted flower children at *America*? After all, as Fr. Neuhaus has said, *America* has developed a "cranky" streak and "is no longer the influence that it once was."

Now, here's the kicker: The open-minded liberals at *Commonweal*, the *Reporter*, and *America* have banned our spicy and satirical ads. Isn't *that* "thought-control"? What happened to free speech, diversity, and inclusiveness? Have the liberals become stiff and rigid in their autumn years? *Newsweek* says we're "cheeky," Cardinal Law says we're "a sign of new life in the Church," and the *Los Angeles Times* says we're "influential." Apparently, we're just too bold, vigorous, and potent to tolerate. Yes, we've turned liberals into illiberals — and not even a warm hug can change that.

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look of anguish—and anger—on her face. A handful of students walked out of the ceremonies with her, in protest of Abu-Jamal, who delivered his address on audiotape, produced in prison. Other students turned their backs on the stage from which his voice came. Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther, talked about "Africans in America" and "revolt." On Capitol Hill, Rep. Tom DeLay asked for a moment of silence in honor of Daniel Faulkner, Mrs. Faulkner, and the concept of decency itself, presumably.

Abu-Jamal has never denied killing Officer Faulkner; his guilt is not in doubt. As it happens, though, his case is not without complications. It had its most thorough and trustworthy examination, unsurprisingly, by the journalist Stuart Taylor Jr., in a lengthy 1995 article published in *The American Lawyer*. Taylor concluded that, his guilt aside, Abu-Jamal had received a defective trial. It would appear that a new trial—particularly given the weight of the sentence—is appropriate.

But the exaltation of Abu-Jamal as a noble and praiseworthy man is something else. His invitation by Evergreen State was in part an act of ignorance, but in part an act of hatred—against the Faulkners, against the police, and against the norms of civil society. A senior class that will embrace Abu-Jamal as commencement speaker is a senior class afflicted with moral idiocy. The school has disgraced itself—not that many of its students would know it.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: In regard to the letter from 21st Century Fax, I feel I must let you in on a couple of things. First, to buy a domain name costs only $70, not the "amazingly low price of $200," as Craig Erb would like you to believe. Second, the website in your name belongs to you, unless 21st Century Fax has a company named William F. Buckley Jr. I know this because I represented a woman whose name was bought by another person, and I helped her get it back. You own the website, not them.

Regards,
Art Sesma
Calabasas, Calif.

Dear Mr. Sesma: Thanks for the information. I've wondered about the general situation, remembering that Henry Luce wanted to call his new publication *Sports* but ran into a copyright problem. The owner was willing to sell *Sports* for a half million or so, and Luce said the hell with you, hence *Life, Time, Fortune*—and *Sports Illustrated*.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: My father, L. W. Chandler, is a subscriber to your magazine. He has informed me of your extensive knowledge of the English language. For this reason, I believe you can help me settle an argument with my current English teacher over whether quotation marks should be used for titles of books, magazines, etc. I have researched this, and all my sources tell me quotation marks should be used. My English teacher, however, relies on information given to her by officials at Humboldt State University. HSU claims that one should underline any title. I hope you can end this argument.

Yours truly,
Wayne Chandler
Smith River, Calif.

Dear Mr. Chandler: Both are permitted, and practiced.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I'd like to prevail on your sense of accuracy and fairness and ask you to consider replacing your use of the term "Congressman" with "Congressperson." As I know you are aware, we have people of both genders in Congress these days, and it is disturbing and offensive to see a term used that excludes a significant portion of the House's representation.

Ellen P. Ward
Falls Church, Va.

Dear Ms. Ward: Forgive me for omitting the six paragraphs that followed your first, here reproduced. But the arguments you use are very familiar and we plead nothing more than the clumsiness of the "person" suffix, an affront to the ear and the plague of freshpersons in college everywhere. Why not just relax on the subject inasmuch as everything else (quite properly) is going in the direction of a full acknowledgment of women's rights?

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Recently you received a letter from Timothy McEnaney requesting maps in articles, which the "geographic cognocenti" have failed to provide. I no longer have a Latin dictionary, but I believe the writer meant to use the Italian word "conoscenti." Of course, he may have wanted to give the Italian word a Spanish pronunciation—the *gn* pronounced like the Spanish *ñ*. It still would have been incorrect, but more racy.

Saludos,
Frank Belsito
Hollywood, Fla.

Dear Mr. Belsito: You don't need a Latin dictionary. My *Heritage* lists cognoscenti—"A person with superior, usually specialized knowledge or highly refined taste; a connoisseur." Etymology, obsolete Italian, from Latin *cognoscens, cognoscent*—present participle of *cognoscere*, to know. See cognition . . .

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ ABROAD ■

Kosovo, from Scratch

The next Balkans challenge.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

KACANIK, Ruckhat, and Lukare are villages of which few people had ever heard. They are among the more dreadful sites in Kosovo where mass graves have been identified. There are already over 50 such sites, and more remain to be discovered. Kosovar Albanians were systematically tortured. Almost all their houses have been burnt out, and the corpses of whole families lie in the charred ruins, or are buried in the backyard. In one place, the Feronikl factory, bodies were thrown into industrial furnaces, to leave no trace. Ten thousand is the number currently given for the dead. Many tens of thousands are still missing. The true number of victims may never be known.

Roman Genn

Atrocities are nothing new in Yugoslavia. During the Second World War, the concentration camp at Jasenovac was a byword for brutality, operated by the Serbs without benefit of German help. At least 70,000 people died there on account of their race. Seizing power after 1945, the Yugoslav Communists killed as many again, this time on account of their class.

The example of the previous generation had nothing in it to deter Slobodan Milosevic. He too could hope to fulfill his ambitions through mass murder. Responsibility for the killing fields of Bosnia, and now of Kosovo, rests with him. Through his actions, Serbia has lost all right or moral claim to rule either province. Recognition of this fact has driven much of the local Serb population to flee. Whatever they may or may not have done personally, the Serbs of Kosovo understand that they are exposed to the revenge of the Albanian majority.

Mr. Pryce-Jones is a historian, journalist, and novelist based in London.

Bosnia is now a U.N. protectorate. A Bosnian government goes through the motions of administration, but U.N. personnel alone guarantee law and order. The world community, in other words, has introduced an updated version of the typical 19th-century colonial regime.

Justified as it is by the inhuman behavior of Milosevic and his men, the occupation by NATO of Kosovo goes even further. American, British, French, German, Italian, and now Russian troops control mutually accepted zones. Forcing the Serbian military and police units to withdraw, they have also—unwillingly, even accidentally—helped to finalize the retribution that the Serbs have brought on their own heads.

Nor is this simply a human drama. For with the Serbs have gone the state and its apparatus, its law courts, its policing, its financing and bureaucracy, and the huge majority of the technicians and engineers who ran utilities and communications. Into the foreseeable future, some NATO or Russian colonel is going to have to make all manner of decisions for which he is not equipped, in order to maintain the necessities of daily life. These officers and their men alone stand between the remaining inhabitants and anarchy. For Kosovo, this is zero hour. The country starts over from scratch.

Called by its proper name, NATO's intervention is imperialism, also duly updated for these times into humanitarianism. In the last century, European powers liked to argue that they had the moral duty to intervene in Africa or Asia on the grounds that local rulers or customs were too barbarous to be tolerated. Imperialism was presented as a burden to be manfully borne, a civilizing mission. This had the merit of truth—though of course it was not the full truth. With imperialism came law, and the incorporation of hitherto remote regions into the world order. Today's humanitarianism has a comparable task to undertake.

In Germany in 1945, the incoming Allies confronted another zero hour. Each major ally had its zone of occupation. Nothing remained of the Hitlerite state and its administration. A whole new state, complete with institutions and officialdom, had to be created. The Western Allies and the Soviets launched competing state systems in the two Germanys they sponsored. This division ended in the final emergence of a united and democratic Germany. The Russian dash to occupy Pristina airport is a ghostly replay of that earlier chapter, a hopeful claim to the same sort of armed privileges they enjoyed for so long in a partitioned Germany.

In speech after speech, President Clinton and Prime Minister Blair repeat that they accept responsibility for repairing at least some of the material damage in Kosovo and Serbia. They and their spokesmen prattle about financial costs and rebuilding programs and the development of southeast Europe, all seemingly a code for lucrative business contracts. If policy is limited to such considerations, however, zero hour will extend indefinitely and dangerously in Kosovo, and in Bosnia as well.

Like the Germans after 1945, the Kosovar Albanians are in need of the institutions necessary for pluralism and democracy. Only on the day when the local population is operating these institutions for itself will NATO forces transform from imperialists into liberators.

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But NATO leaders do not yet appear to have realized that the advance from zero hour involves nothing less than the introduction of these Albanians to democracy and its values. Albanian nationalism has existed for a century now, but it has not yet shaped a coherent nation. Albanians owe their primary loyalties to the family, the clan, and the religion. With the rather particular exception of the Mafia, they are the only people in Europe who still practice the blood feud. No Serb can be expected to live with that. In common with all the other citizens of former Yugoslavia, Serbs too must have political institutions to safeguard them.

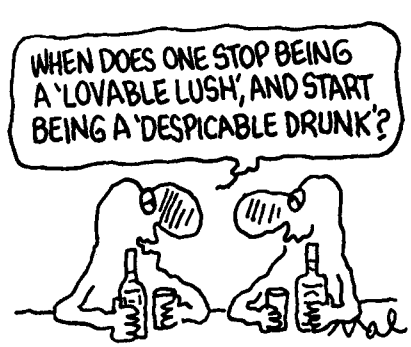
Under the pressures of the moment, NATO leaders have consented to an unsatisfactory cease-fire agreement. If the words mean what they say, Kosovo is to be autonomous, but it will not become independent. In the absence of power-sharing or parliamentary institutions, the Albanians still struggle for supremacy in the customary clan style. There is nowhere to go except into the market square with a gun in hand. Struggles of this sort recently engulfed Albania proper, where every man proved only too willing to shoot anyone even slightly different from himself.

The cease-fire agreement furthermore legitimizes Milosevic as the head of a state openly dealing with NATO on equal terms. His indictment as a war criminal is another in the extended line of threats unlikely ever to be realized. He retains enough patronage and power to suppress even his extreme nationalist critics, such as leading Serb Orthodox churchmen, who accuse him of treason for pulling out of Kosovo. Piously declaring that he hopes Serbs will soon dump Milosevic, President Clinton seems unprepared actively to do anything about it (although there is talk, unreliable, of covert agitation against the dictator). This is as feebly self-defeating as Clinton's earlier promise not to send American ground troops into Kosovo. Meanwhile, Milosevic has been allowed to withdraw all his armor intact, as though he really were the victor he claims to be.

Carried to its conclusion, the flawed logic of this cease-fire dictates that though the Serbs have indeed lost the moral right to rule Kosovo, Milosevic or even a successor will one day nonetheless be in a position to reimpose there the overall sovereignty of the Serb state.

Again, we have been here before. This is a startling repeat of the outcome of the recent campaigns in the Gulf to curb Saddam Hussein, another local dictator. There too, the U.N. alliance, also American led, convincingly achieved its military aims but then did not oblige Saddam to pay the price for his aggressions. Surviving in power, Saddam has been able to convert defeat on the ground into political victory, remaining in a position to victimize his own people and his neighbors, and effectively frustrating the purpose of the campaign against him. The U.N. alliance had the means, but not the will, to impose a different and democratic state on Iraq. The same goes for Kosovo now. But if humanitarianism is here to stay, Iraqis and Yugoslavs emerging from dictatorship are entitled to the same consideration as Germans after Hitler.

Imperial obligations impose hard choices. Zero hour will last in Kosovo until there is a different and democratic state structure. Already immense in themselves, the obstacles to such a structure are insurmountable so long as Milosevic remains in power. In the imperial tradition, NATO and Russian proconsuls will no doubt continue to make decisions as best they can for as long as they have to. Keeping the peace and ensuring the necessities of daily life is a duty, but not a long-term solution. Unless and until the native Serbs and Albanians are able to live in a state system in which they can all have confidence, this bizarre international mini-empire in the Balkans must simmer in the mess of its own contradictions. **NR**



■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Gore-Dole 2000!

A place for Mrs. D.

RAMESH PONNURU

ONE day Elizabeth Dole is calling for more gun control, the next she's saying that a ban on abortion shouldn't even be discussed, the one after that she's being cooed over by Rosie O'Donnell. You half expect an endorsement from Barbra Streisand. This is not a promising strategy for winning the Republican presidential nomination. So the assumption that Mrs. Dole is *really* running to be George W. Bush's vice president has become a piece of cocktail-party wisdom among the Republican cognoscenti. But it might make more sense for her to be Al Gore's running mate.

No kidding. There's no doubt Mrs. Dole is running for president in earnest. It's easy to see why she thinks she has a shot: Her poll numbers are good, her qualifications are arguably as solid as those of the other candidates, and Gov. Bush is a mere mortal like the rest of us. But to say that she *could* win is not to say that it's likely.

Bush will be hard to beat. But Mrs. Dole is probably not improving her odds by running a few steps to his left. Her calculation seems to be that he isn't leaving much room to his right, and that even that space is crowded with candidates. But that's also where most of Bush's potential opponents among Republican activists and primary voters are, and she's a heavier hitter than most of the conservatives in the race. She should have tried her luck.

The main problem with the notion that Mrs. Dole is running to play second fiddle to Bush is that it's unlikely

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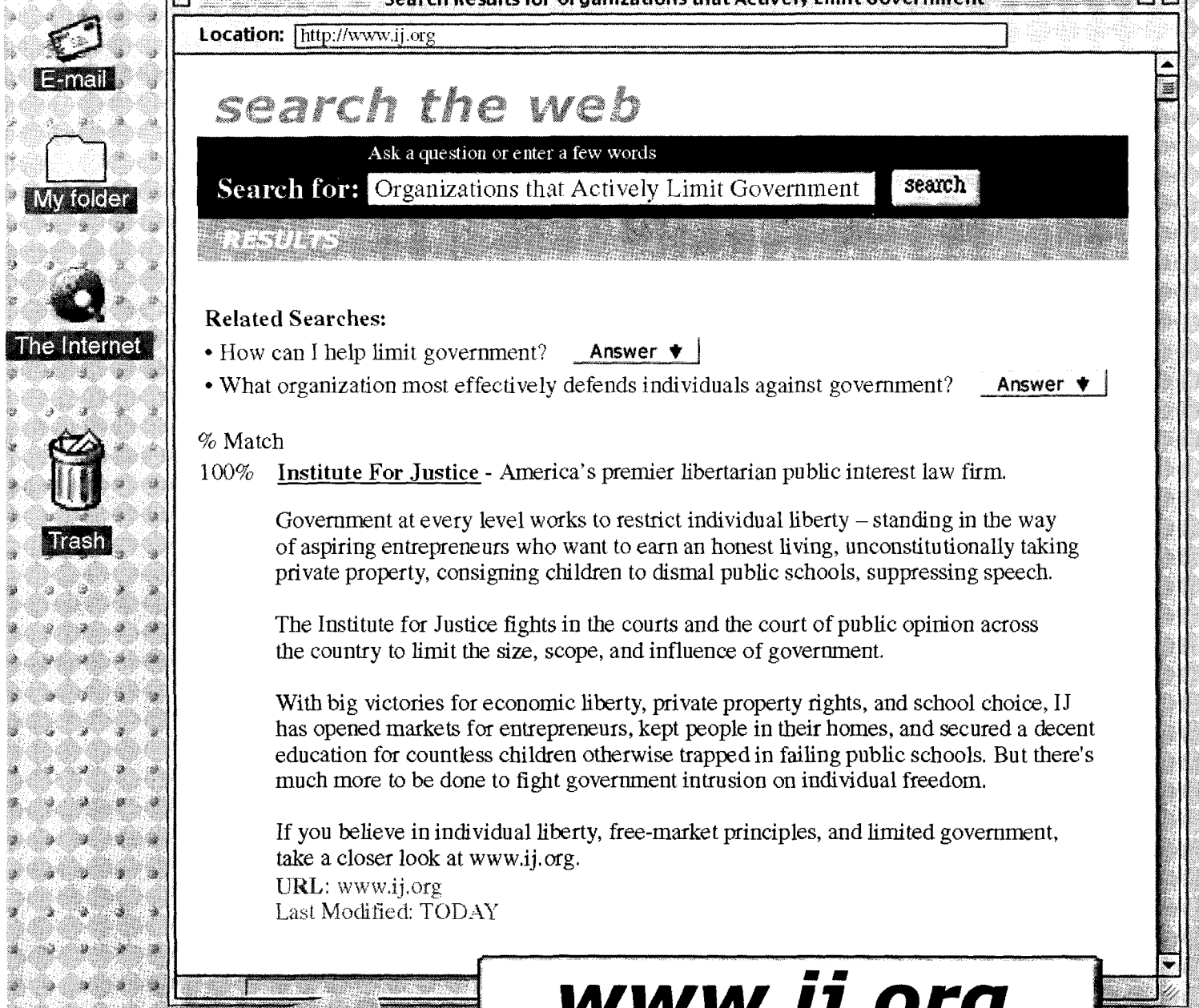
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he would pick her. Every Republican presidential nominee since 1968 has tried to balance the ticket by reaching out to the part of the party that is suspicious of him; in Bush's case, that means he would gesture rightward. Nor would Mrs. Dole secure the electoral votes of a crucial state for the GOP.

She would bring some excitement to the ticket, both because she's a political celebrity and because she's a woman. That would tip the choice to her if the presidential nominee's campaign were flat-lining and looking for some oomph. Because Mrs. Dole's husband was in that situation in August 1996, he needed to pick a Republican rock star—really, only Colin Powell, Bill Bennett, or Jack Kemp would do. There's no reason to think that Gov. Bush will be in such a dire state in 2000.

So if Mrs. Dole is to run for national office in 2000, she just may have to do it on the Democratic ticket.

Running as a Democrat would return her to her roots—people forget that the first White House she worked for was Lyndon Johnson's. More important, the political tradition she represents—emphasizing efficient administration of government and the search for elite consensus—has a fine Republican pedigree but is now mainly found in the Democratic party. Her intense concern for safety is also typical of modern Democrats, as is the fact that she thinks it's sexist to speculate that she's running for veep (something people say about Republican dark horse John Kasich all the time).

Elizabeth Dole and Al Gore by Roman Genn

These days, Democrats would be more likely than Republicans to respond favorably to Mrs. Dole's 1984 statement that the drinking age could be raised to 24. Most Republicans, even the most self-consciously compassionate ones, would not join her in regarding the main purpose of government as "to make a difference to the plight of people in need." At the same time, the rise of the New Democrats has erased the image of the Democratic party as culturally radical and hostile to business, making it more hospitable to the likes of Mrs. Dole.

Al Gore, the probable Democratic nominee, would have several reasons to pick her as his running mate. Republicans might not need Mrs. Dole's star power, but if the polls at the time that Gore makes his decision are anything like they are today, he very well might. That power would be magnified by the shock value of putting a prominent Republican on the ticket, and a female one at that.

Her mere presence on the slate would help Gore make his case against today's Republican party. That party, he could say, has rejected millions of moderate women such as Mrs. Dole: The far Right rejected her in the Republican primaries and then blackballed her as a vice-presidential nominee at the Republican convention (which will be over by the time Gore makes his pick). The Democratic party, Gore could continue, is ready to welcome the women Republicans have abandoned.

Mrs. Dole might even tempt a few of the evangelical conservatives, with whom she has a strong rapport, to vote for Gore. Democrat and Republican, moderate liberal and moderate conservative, man and woman: It's a consultant's dream ticket. Gore should think about ordering some "Gore-Dole 2000" buttons before the Democratic convention.

And here's one more thing the vice president should consider: Mrs. Dole would make him look warm and spontaneous by comparison. **NR**

■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

Drug Test

Can the GOP beat a new entitlement?

KATE O'BEIRNE

LAST November it was the president's cheap sex that sent older Americans into the arms of the GOP. This year, Democrats hope to win seniors back with cheap drugs.

Now that Republicans have neutralized "the third rail of American politics" with their pledge to protect Social Security, a recent Democratic poll finds that the GOP enjoys a 12-point lead among seniors. And growing bipartisan support for the free-market reform of Medicare means liberals may have to scotch forever their dream of a nationalized health-care system.

Enter the Medicare prescription-drug benefit about to be proposed by the administration. It is designed both to win votes and to block Medicare reform (and hence keep seniors on the dole for years to come). There is no coordinated GOP response planned to this high-stakes Democratic gambit. Says a GOP House leadership aide of Republicans, "They're terrified."

Republicans realize that the Democrats' drug proposal is hugely popular. Polls from both parties confirm that a large majority of the public favors Medicare coverage of prescription drugs. With nearly nine out of ten Medicare beneficiaries using prescription drugs, the new benefit wins near-universal approval from the Medicare set. But younger voters support it too. Republicans point to one of their own polls showing that 42 percent of their conservative base would favor a Democrat who backed the benefit over a Republican who argued that it would bankrupt Medicare. "Terrified" sounds about right.

Some Republicans are therefore counseling their party not to get on the

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unpopular side of the issue. One set of talking points circulating among House Republicans warns, "Republicans should not blast or bash Clinton on Prescription Drugs—he has the high ground going in. The goal should be to get outside third parties to question the plan's viability, honesty, and credibility." The injunction to enlist such outside help shows just how timid Republicans are on the issue.

But the pharmaceutical industry and conservative analysts have indeed challenged the plan's "viability, honesty, and credibility." The Heritage Foundation, for example, refutes the case for a universal benefit by pointing out that the majority of beneficiaries already enjoys prescription-drug coverage. More than two-thirds of Medicare beneficiaries who use prescription drugs have some of their costs covered through Medicare HMOs, private health plans, the Veterans Administration, "Medigap" policies, or Medicaid.

And there is little evidence of hardship in meeting the uncovered costs of prescriptions. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1997 the average senior spent $637 on prescription and non-prescription drugs. The lowest-income seniors reported spending less on drugs than they did in restaurants. Only 10 percent of the elderly spent between $1,000 and $2,000 a year on drugs, and only 4 percent reported costs of more than $2,000.

Still, the administration will rail against the gaps in coverage and predict a coming decline in coverage in order to justify their universal benefit. Although there is no evidence that a large number of the elderly cannot afford medication, many seniors are upset about the high cost of prescription drugs even if they don't pay it themselves. They can be expected to support a proposal that promises to reduce the cost of prescriptions, not because they need relief, but because they want revenge on drug companies.

The Democrats happily reinforce the notion that drug companies have enriched themselves at the expense of the ailing elderly. House Democrats have been touting their own district-based studies purporting to reveal price-gouging by the pharmaceutical industry. The studies compare the drug prices paid by federal bulk purchasers, like the Veterans Administration, with retail prices and conclude that the elderly are victims of widespread "price discrimination." Democrats who have road-tested the message are delighted with local headlines such as, "The Elderly Get Taken on Drugs."

But not so fast. An analysis by a health-care economist at the Wharton School points out that the Democratic studies compare the price paid directly to manufacturers by bulk purchasers with the price charged by a drug store that includes wholesaler and retailer markups. The Democratic calculations also fail to include generic drugs, which have a far lower price differential. Clearly, the Democrats hope to demonize drug companies just as they did the insurance industry in 1993.

But the drug industry hasn't waited to defend itself until pending legislation forces the creation of its own "Harry and Louise" ad campaign. For the past few years, the industry has been running ads heralding breakthroughs in drug treatments, hoping that the public will resist price controls that threaten future research.

And proponents of the new benefit face problems of their own. Although the polls and slogans favor the president's idea of providing a Medicare benefit to cover prescription drugs, the thorny details have postponed the introduction of his plan. The bills that create a new entitlement for prescription drugs keep the price tag of the new program down by including price controls on new drugs. The White House plan will likely not include controls—an easy target for critics—so the president has to choose among unattractive options to pay for the new benefit. His choices include increasing tobacco taxes, raiding the Social Security surplus, and raising premiums on beneficiaries. Depending on how the benefit is designed, estimates of its cost range from $20 billion to $40 billion a year.

That's why some Republicans are convinced that the president will present a press-release proposal with few details; it's a way to duck the hard financing choices and avoid the reception his last specific health-care proposal got. "I expect two pages," says Deborah Steelman, a GOP health-care expert.

Venona
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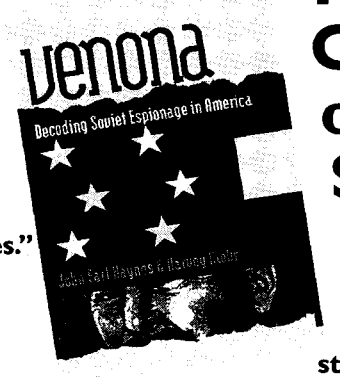

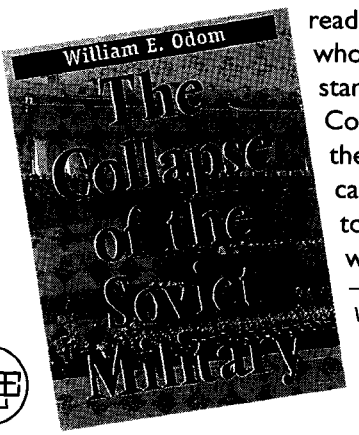

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That would deny Republicans the chance to criticize details.

If the GOP doesn't design an attractive alternative to the costly new benefit—say, a new tax credit for drugs—Democrats stand to score major political and policy victories. Minority leader Dick Gephardt is reportedly convinced that a slogan that wins back older voters is his ticket to the Speaker's suite: "Want free prescriptions for seniors? Vote Democratic." And his fellow liberals recognize that a new drug benefit would prop up the current Medicare system, which could yet prove a launching pad for "national health care." Once Medicare is sweetened with a new drug benefit, risk-averse seniors are likely to sour on plans to reform the program through consumer choice and competition.

Be afraid. Be very afraid. NR

■ BUREAUCRACY ■

Race Rules the Air

Quotas and the FCC.

MATTHEW BERRY

If you were trying to dramatize the plight of minorities in the broadcasting industry, you probably wouldn't choose Stevie Wonder as your poster boy. After all, he is one of the most successful entertainers of all time. But when Federal Communications Commission chairman William Kennard needed a witness last February to testify about the difficulties facing black radio- and TV-station owners, he called on . . . Stevie, of course, who owns an FM radio station in Compton, Calif.

The multimillionaire singer-songwriter complained that black station owners are "an endangered species pursued by large corporate predators," and he portrayed himself as one of the masses whose concerns are "not dominated by the Dow Jones but by Mary Jones." Kennard praised Wonder's testimony as "very, very compelling."

Of all the officials in this administration, the Justice Department's Bill Lann Lee and the Education Department's Norma Cantu have drawn the most attention for their zeal in employing racial quotas and preferences, often in defiance of federal courts. Undeservedly left out of the limelight, however, has been Kennard (pronounced "canard"). His tenure as the nation's top telecommunications regulator has been marked by a dogged pursuit of racial preferences. Indeed, he has stated that his "biggest challenge" is to ensure that the ongoing telecommunications revolution is an "inclusive" one.

Kennard's bid for such "inclusiveness" seemed to suffer last year when the D.C. circuit court struck down the FCC's affirmative-action regulations for radio- and TV-station employment as unconstitutional. In the wake of this ruling, however, the FCC quickly proposed new affirmative-action rules. Although the court had rejected the commission's previous regulations as encouraging stations to hire by quota, the new rules would do exactly the same thing, if by a more indirect route.

As written, the rules require stations to institute recruitment quotas. When filling job vacancies, broadcasters must use a specified number of "recruitment sources" (such as newspapers) targeted to minorities, with the required number of such sources determined by the percentage of minorities in the local labor market. Stations must also keep track of the racial and gender breakdown of applicants generated by each recruitment source. For example, an ad in the *Washington Post* might draw 14 applications: from six white men, four black men, three Hispanic women, and one Aleut man.

Broadcasters are then supposed to assess the "productivity" of their recruitment sources and can be fined for failing to drum up a sufficient number of minority applicants. In other words, they are expected to create an applicant pool that looks like the local labor force.

It would be bad enough if the FCC sought only to require broadcasters to recruit by quota; but its interests obviously run beyond that. Once a station produces a proportional applicant pool, you can bet the FCC won't rest easy until the station hires minorities on at least a proportional basis. As Reps. Michael Oxley and Ralph Hall noted in response to the FCC's proposed rules, the commission's contention that it has no interest in whether stations actually hire certain numbers from this or that group "stretches credulity." Chances are, any station that fails to *hire* by quota once it has *recruited* by quota will put itself at severe risk of sanctions, including fines and the loss of its license.

Kennard, of course, realizes that such practices face tough sledding in the courts. Under current jurisprudence, documented evidence of persisting discrimination is crucial to any hope that preferences will survive judicial review. The chairman has therefore announced that the commission will conduct a series of studies to document racial and gender bias in the telecommunications industry, studies that will go on to be used in the legal defense of affirmative action.

Earlier this year, the commission released its first report, purporting to document the discrimination faced by minority owners in competition for advertising revenues. While funded by the FCC, the study was actually produced by the Civil Rights Forum on Communications Policy, a liberal group that describes itself as working "to bring civil rights organizations and community groups into the current debate over the future of our media environment." One FCC staffer likened the arrangement to a contract between the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the NRA for a study on gun control.

The FCC's report is a shockingly shoddy piece of research that proves almost nothing. Its central finding is that stations aimed at minority listeners earn less advertising revenue per listener than stations aimed at the general population. Advertisers, the report's author concludes, therefore undervalue minority consumers in a discriminatory fashion.

There is, however, one gigantic flaw in the report. As the study's author acknowledges, the average listener of a general-format station has an income approximately 20 percent greater than that of the average listener to a minority-geared station. As these customers

Mr. Berry is a staff attorney with the Institute for Justice in Washington, D.C.

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have more disposable income, it makes sense that advertisers would be willing to pay more to reach them. The phenomenon is also common in television, where companies cough up top dollar to reach affluent professionals irrespective of race: For example, you have to pay more to advertise on Fox's *Ally McBeal* than on CBS's *Everybody Loves Raymond*, even though the latter has attracted more Monday-night viewers.

As he girds for further courtroom battles over preferences, Kennard is moving forward on other fronts as well. Early in his tenure, he signaled that he would condition FCC approval of mergers and acquisitions on "a company's willingness to help diversify the ownership in the marketplace." His stance recently paid off in a big way for Chester C. Davenport, one of the nation's wealthiest black entrepreneurs.

SBC Communications, Inc., a "Baby Bell," is now trying to win FCC approval for its acquisition of Ameritech, another Baby Bell. So in April, in what SBC executives openly described as a bid to appease Kennard, Ameritech announced that it was selling half of its wireless-telephone business to GTE and a company owned by Davenport, who is reported to have a net worth of as much as $100 million.

Speaking of ways to make the wealthy even wealthier, Kennard has asked Congress to reinstitute the program that gave tax breaks to corporations that sold radio and television stations to minorities. That program is the only racial preference eliminated by the Republicans since their takeover of Congress and was widely regarded to represent affirmative action at its worst: Among other problems, companies often used wealthy minorities as fronts to acquire stations on the cheap. As a result, a few lucky black Americans ended up making a bundle for little or no work.

Over the last couple of years, William Kennard has turned the FCC into a hotbed of race-conscious activism. While his agenda may benefit a Stevie Wonder or two, dividing Americans by race, in the telecommunications industry or elsewhere, will do little to aid the truly disadvantaged. Nor will it bring us closer to the day when, to paraphrase one of songs with which Stevie is associated, ebony and ivory will live together in perfect harmony. **NR**

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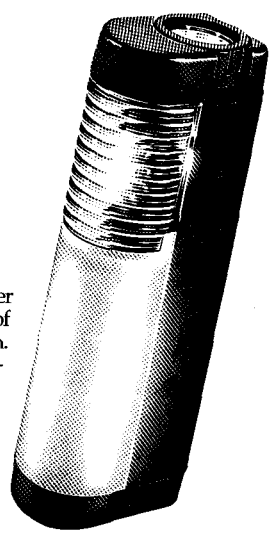

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■ THE HILL ■

Sour, Curdled, and Gross

How Congress got milk wrong.

DAVE JUDAY

Of all the issues that Congress deals with, perhaps none is less glamorous to members than agriculture policy. As Republican senator Pat Roberts of Kansas noted last year, some members "don't even know we passed a farm bill in 1996." But that bill—commonly referred to as the "freedom-to-farm law"—is one of the boldest reforms effected by Congress since the Republicans took control in 1995.

The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized that the bill represented "the kind of change the 1994 election was supposed to be about." The National Center for Policy Analysis, a conservative think tank, called it "a success comparable to welfare reform." Even CNN noticed that it was "the most far-reaching agricultural-policy reform since the 1930s."

Despite all it accomplished, however, there's one thing the legislation failed to do: make much progress in federal dairy policy. Instead, Congress deferred such decisions to this year. Even among the ag-policy wonkery, dairy policy remains a conundrum. A top aide to a congressional ag committee recently confided that "there are maybe five" congressmen who understand the issue. It shows: Last year, Congress cheerfully appropriated $200 million in "emergency disaster relief" for dairy farmers—in a year that saw record high income for dairymen.

Part of the 1996 bill's temporizing on dairy was a provision known as the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact. The compact allows a local commission of farmers and state bureaucrats to set the price that processors must pay farmers for raw milk. The commission even has the authority to raise the price of milk entering the region from outside the compact—which essentially keeps milk from places like Wisconsin and Minnesota out of New England. This is the rough equivalent of allowing Amish buggy-makers in Pennsylvania to set the price of Detroit-made cars east of Pittsburgh.

The Northeast Compact was set to expire in April 1999, but Congress extended it until October. Congress is now considering not only whether to make the compact permanent, but whether to extend it to other states—establishing, for example, a Southern Dairy Compact. If that happens, Wisconsin farmers could lose about $64 million in annual milk sales, according to a study by the University of Missouri.

Roman Genn

After watching what the six New England states got away with, twelve other state legislatures passed bills either to join the Northeast Compact or cast their fates with a southern one. Ten more states are now considering such a move. Compacts require both federal authorization and state legislative action, and must be set up among contiguous states. So what started in New England may reach to Oklahoma, as Republican principles have held up no better in state capitals than on Capitol Hill: Six of the nine governors to sign versions of the compact statute are Republicans: in New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Mississippi, Alabama, and Oklahoma. The only governor to veto a bill was Democrat Zell Miller, then the governor of Georgia. He called it "counterproductive" and akin to a "price-fixing scheme."

In Congress, one of the most ardent proponents of compacts is Rep. Roy Blunt, a Republican from Missouri. He's the GOP's chief deputy whip and George W. Bush's point man on the Hill. Bush is one governor who hasn't yet made his position on compacts known. In mid June, a compact bill passed both houses of the Texas legislature, but died a peculiar procedural death before reaching Bush's desk. The governor may have dodged a bullet: Compacts may be popular among dairymen in New Hampshire, the first primary state, but they'd really put the screws to farmers in Iowa, the first caucus state. That, in a nutshell, is the politics of dairy compacts: They are a matter of raw regional power, philosophical principles be damned.

For example, Republican representative Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas (a prospective Southern Compact state) defends compacts as a "states' rights" issue. But Hutchison, a House manager in the Clinton trial, a former prosecutor, and something of a political intellectual, surely knows better. These regional "OPECs for milk," as they have been dubbed, are clearly a barrier to interstate commerce, thus unconstitutional under the commerce clause. William Van Alstyne, a constitutional-law expert at Duke Law School, has cited a 1994 Supreme Court comment that "a surprisingly large number of Commerce Clause cases arose out of attempts to protect local dairy farmers."

While the Constitution does allow states to enter into compacts if authorized to do so by Congress, these arrangements traditionally have been for infrastructure projects such as air-

Mr. Juday is an adjunct fellow of the Hudson Institute's Center for Global Food Issues.

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ports and bridges. Some in the early part of the 20th century were to settle boundary disputes. The GOP Congress is now the first in history to approve an interstate compact for the purpose of price-setting.

Moreover, for a congressional majority elected on a platform of accountability and responsibility, the compact legislation was passed in a most unaccountable and irresponsible way. In the only vote either body of Congress ever took expressly on the Northeast Compact, the Senate defeated the measure. Nonetheless, it was revived in the House-Senate "conference committee" and added to the final statute largely by the maneuvering of two powerful Republicans: New York's Gerald Solomon (now retired) and Louisiana's Bob Livingston (then the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, later Speaker-for-a-second).

So who is opposing these compacts? Wisconsin's senators, naturally—Russell Feingold and Herb Kohl—as well as Minnesota's, Paul Wellstone and Rod Grams. The first three are Democratic liberals. The last is a Republican conservative. Their states' dairymen—the most efficient producers—stand to lose big in this cartel scheme, which is why they've authored a bill to overturn the Northeast Compact. Another sharp critic is Massachusetts's Barney Frank. His state has fewer than 350 dairy farmers, but the compact has cost Massachusetts—a member of that compact—nearly $25 million. Simple math reveals a mind-boggling fact: The higher prices that consumers pay as a result of the compact amount to about $74,000 per dairy farmer. Yet the average Massachusetts dairyman is getting only about $3,000 extra per year.

So where does the money go? Mainly to big dairy farms in Vermont, so far the going-away winner under the scheme. Smaller New England farms aren't doing so hot: The region's dairy farms went out of business at a 25 percent faster rate in the first year of the compact than before it. The compact, by shielding big Vermont farms from outside competition and boosting their cash flow with artificially high price levels, has turned these larger farms into predators that gobble the smaller farms

Arabian Fables (I)

How the Arabs soften up world opinion with fanciful myths.

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazis, had it right. Just tell people big lies often enough and they'll believe them. The Arabs have learned that lesson well. They have swayed world opinion by myths and lies that have no basis in fact.

What are some of these myths?

The "Palestinians". The concept of "Palestinians" did not exist until about 1948. Until then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the Palestinian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World War II Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in Berlin hatching plans with Adolf Hitler for world conquest and how to kill all the Jews); there was the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was *The Palestine Post*; and so much more.

The Arabs who now call themselves "Palestinians" do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that "Palestine" is their ancestral homeland. But they are no distinct nationality at all. They are the same as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond. There is no more difference between the "Palestinians" and the other Arabs of those countries than there is between, say, the citizens of Minnesota and those of Wisconsin. What's more, many of the "Palestinians", or their immediate ancestors, came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland. The nationhood of the "Palestinians" is a myth.

"The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!"

The "West Bank". Again, this is a concept that did not exist until 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state of Israel, on the very day of its creation. Miraculously, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But Transjordan stayed in possession of Judea and Samaria and eastern Jerusalem. The Jordanians expelled all the Jews, destroyed all Jewish houses of worship, and renamed as "West Bank" the territories that had been Judea and Samaria since time immemorial. The attempt, quite successful, was to persuade an uninformed world that these were ancestral parts of the Jordanian Arab Kingdom.

Even after the total rout of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which the Jordanians were driven out of Judea/Samaria and of Jerusalem, they and the world continued to call this territory the "West Bank", a geographical and political concept that cannot be found on any except the most recent maps.

The concept of the "West Bank" is a myth.

The "Occupied Territories". After the victorious Six-Day War, during which the Israeli army defeated the same cabal of Arabs that had invaded the country in 1948, Israel regained possession of Judea/Samaria, the Gaza Strip, which had been occupied by the Egyptians, and of the Golan Heights, a plateau the size of Queens, which, though originally part of Palestine, had been assigned to Syria by British-French agreement.

The last sovereign in Judea/Samaria and in Gaza was the British mandatory power — and before it was the Ottoman Empire. All of Palestine, including what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, was, by the Balfour Declaration, destined to be the Jewish National Home. How then could the Israelis possibly be "occupiers" in their own territory? Who would be the sovereign and who the rightful inhabitants?

The concept of "occupied territories" is an Arab propaganda myth.

Unable so far to destroy Israel on the battlefield — though they are feverishly preparing for their next assault — the Arabs are now trying to overcome and destroy Israel by their acknowledged "policy of stages". That policy is to get as much land as possible carved out of Israel "by peaceful and diplomatic" means, so as to make Israel indefensible and softened up for the final assault. The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it.

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the compact was supposed to protect in the first place. To add insult to injury, this takeover is supported by higher grocery bills and higher costs of school-lunch programs—part of what has liberals like Wellstone and Frank up in arms.

Currently, dairy-compact legislation has 39 co-sponsors in the Senate and more then 150 in the House. Approximately half of them are Republicans. If passed, this plan will take what was supposed to be a temporary deal to tide over New England dairymen (who produce about 3 percent of the nation's milk) and make it a permanent Rube Goldberg contraption that will govern about 40 percent of the nation's milk production and about 60 percent of the nation's milk consumption.

Is this what the Republicans' "revolution" is about? Dairy compacts are the beginning of the end of freedom-to-farm—one of the GOP's finest, if most unheralded, accomplishments. Weirdly enough, the task of preserving this signal Republican legacy lies in the hands of Paul Wellstone and Barney Frank. Who'd have thunk it? **NR**

■ CLASS POLITICS ■

Live Carefree or Die

The rise of convenience.

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

THE strangest position Al Gore took in the course of his mid-June campaign launch was on the Lewinsky affair. On the one hand, he described President Clinton's sexual conduct as "inexcusable." On the other, he had no sympathy with those who thought the president should have been called to account on the matter. In fact, Gore didn't have any opinion whatsoever on the political merits of the case. No—what angered him most is that the Lewinsky affair *disrupted his schedule*. As he told CBS's *This Morning*, "What makes me the most upset about it is that we lost a lot of time." For NBC's *Today*, he added, "That's what angered me. And I feel an extra sense of urgency now to make up for that lost time."

"Lost a lot of time"? Time for what? It's always possible that Gore thinks the clock is ticking on some sort of vast national emergency, a 1990s equivalent of the evacuation of Dunkirk. But the closer you look at the agenda Gore hopes to ride to power, the more it appears the vice president really thinks the nation's most pressing political objective is to save time. He's against long commutes and airport delays, in favor of Internet wiring and government-subsidized Internet sites, and positively rapturous about a variety of neato ways to spend that extra time. And that's about it. Virtually every arrow in his policy quiver is a plan to make things less time-consuming, or more efficient, or more clean. It is a politics whose core principle is convenience. When Gore announced his "reinventing government" initiative in the early days of the administration, he said he wanted to reform the state along the lines of the market. It's beginning to look like he meant the supermarket.

Gore is offering Americans a host of picayune initiatives, many of which merely build on Clinton's lead. He is well disposed, for instance, to retro-fitting automobiles for lock-in car seats that will soon come onto the market. He wants to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow parents time off from work to attend parent-teacher conferences. Both are measures the president has test-marketed in various speeches over the last several months. "No parent," says Gore, "should have to risk losing a job to go to a parent-teacher conference at school or to drive a child or an aging parent to the doctor." This no-one-should-ever-have-to-choose formulation is of course a Clinton staple, as if hard choices violated the laws of nature.

But Gore has a more expansive idea of convenience—or, to use his pet word, "livability"—than even his boss. The centerpiece of Gore's lifestyle liberalism is "smart growth," which will give us "good, strong, livable communities with green spaces." Gore has not been more specific than that, other than to express a vague distaste for the admittedly appalling landscape of most American suburbs and an inchoate wish that we were less dependent on our automobiles. There's an irony here. For it was Gore's father, the late Tennessee senator Albert Gore Sr., who sponsored the $25 billion Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, which the younger Gore has always praised for showing that government can "make a difference." It can thus be argued that Gore Senior did more than any other American this century to wreck the country's public-transportation infrastructure and render our automobile-dependence irreversible. No wonder, then, that Al Gore feels so pressed for time—there's so much of his favorite legislation to undo!

Gore has made easier access to the Internet his signature issue. His drive to wire high schools for the World Wide Web has been funded by a special FCC levy that has raised the average household phone bill by ten dollars a year. (In a corollary move, he has taken credit for a private-sector plan to equip those school computers with "firewalls" to protect the kids from all the smut to which his Internet initiative would otherwise expose them.) His Airline Passenger Fair Treatment initiative, dreamed up in tandem with transportation secretary Rodney Slater, would require

Al Gore by Roman Genn

Mr. Caldwell is senior writer for *The Weekly Standard*.

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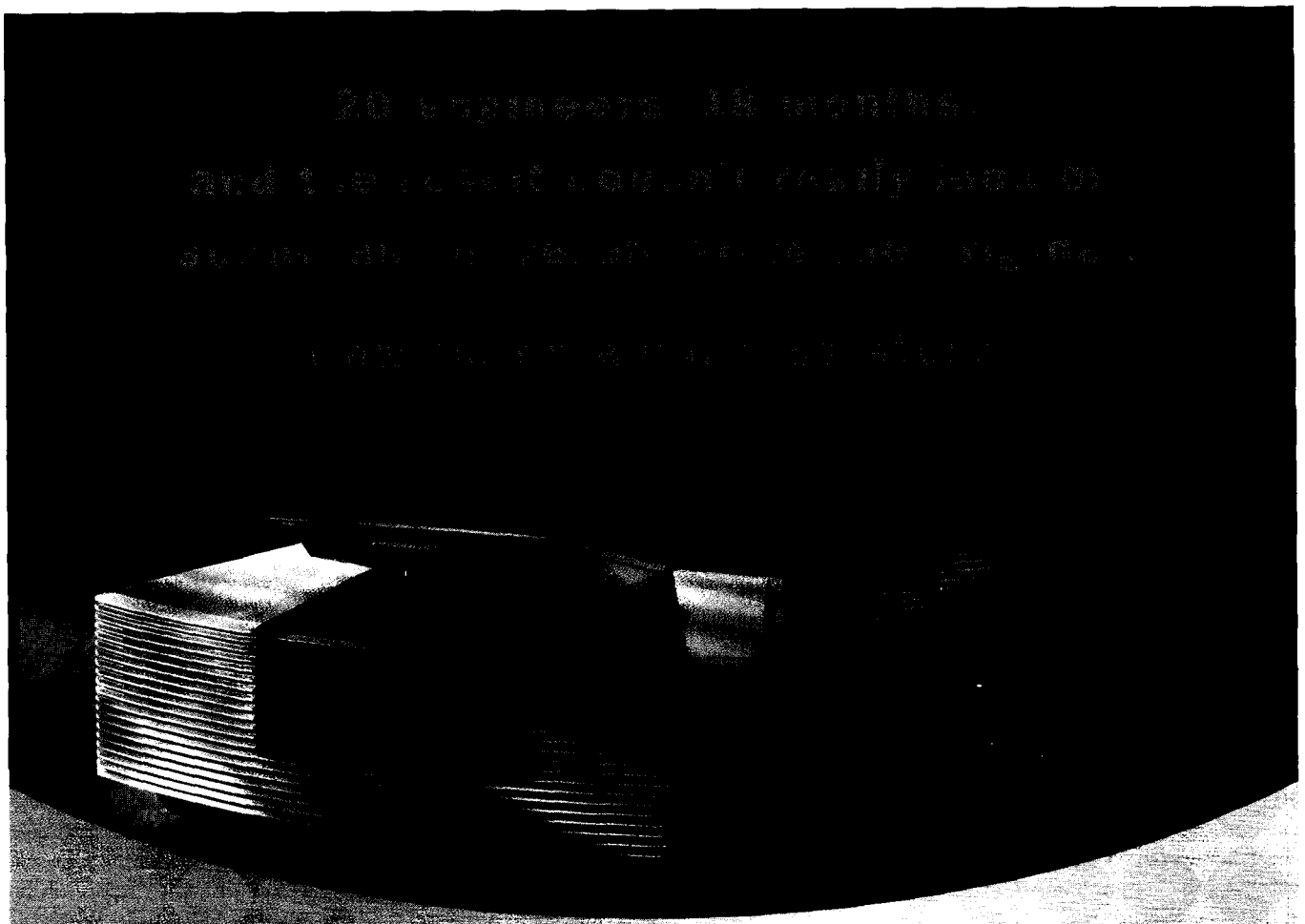

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airlines to give away goodies to air travelers who are delayed without explanation in airports. Then there is Triana, the much-ridiculed plan for a $32 million satellite that would take pictures of the earth from space and download them. It was shot down by Congress in late May, but not before Wisconsin Republican James Sensenbrenner ridiculed it as a "multi-million-dollar screen-saver."

Gore calls the anti-suburban part of his platform a "livability agenda," but in fact his whole politics is a livability agenda—and has been for much of his career. Such wow-that'd-be-cool! initiatives as Triana were Gore's hallmark as a senator. The last decade of his pre-vice-presidential career was marked by such immortal legislation as the All-Terrain Vehicle Consumer Protection Act of 1988, the Fire-Safe Cigarette Implementation Act of 1988 ("to implement the recommendations of the Interagency Committee and the Technical Study Group on Cigarette and Little Cigar Fire Safety"), the Telemarketing Fraud Prevention Act of 1988, the Campus Safety and Security Act of 1989, the Clean Food Transportation Act of 1989, the State-conducted Lotteries Clarification Act of 1990, and the Tropical Forest Consumer Information and Protection Act of 1991.

Fancy food, rain-forest gewgaws, all-terrain vehicles, smoke-free environments—this is a politics of, by, and for the yuppies. The model for this type of politics is the natural-foods store Fresh Fields, which heretofore was politically instructive only in that it gave us an idea of what European supermarkets would have looked like had Germany won World War II. In pursuing a Fresh Fields politics, Gore appears to have been ahead of his time. In May, California Democratic congresswoman Anna Eshoo announced she would sponsor the House version of the Imported Food Safety Act of 1999. (Ted Kennedy and Barbara Mikulski are in charge of the Senate version.) And why not? In this dangerous world, "eating a South American strawberry shouldn't be a game of Russian roulette," as Ms. Eshoo puts it.

Like various Clinton-era tobacco measures, which would have allowed the president, through the Food and Drug Administration, to regulate what people smoke, the new food act would let the president use the FDA as a protectionist tool. The legislation gives an idea of how Democratic coalition-building will work if we have a Gore era. The president, while proclaiming himself a free trader, will use "health hazards" to protect American agricultural interests through de facto tariffs. While proclaiming himself a free-marketeer, the president will act under the mistaken belief that you can regulate foreign businesses without harming U.S. consumers. And while proclaiming himself a president for all Americans, the president will aim his generosity directly at the suburban yuppies whose greatest fear in life is of encountering sub-par pesto, and who now constitute the Democratic party's bedrock. Gore's livability agenda is appropriate for a party that is rejiggering itself as the party of America's new-economy elite.

There are pitfalls to an approach like Gore's. First, Gore has always operated to "enhance" people's "quality of life" through tapping the productivity of the free market. That gets expensive. For two years in a row, Gore was named the Senate's biggest spender by the National Taxpayers Union. But if there's a risk of backfire in Gore's livability agenda, it lies with a second problem. The politics of livability—or "convenience" or "lifestyle" or whatever one chooses to call it—rests on a snobbery that cannot be concealed for long. As the University of Southern California transportation scholar Peter Gordon said to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* last spring, "Who are the smart people who are going to direct smart growth?"

A politics based on improving lifestyle favors those who have more lifestyle to improve. We seem to be witnessing a reversal of partisan constituencies in which, under Gore's tutelage, the Democratic party becomes the party of fat cats. With only modest rhetorical changes, Gore is proposing a departure from the traditional Democratic project of softening the blows suffered by those who don't share in widespread prosperity. In its place, Gore is promising to soften the blows of prosperity itself. **NR**

■ CULTURE WATCH ■

Strange Brew

Eye of newt, toe of frog, and a pinch of PC.

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

THERE are no atheists, it is said, in a foxhole, but there may, it seems, be witches. Earlier this year, some soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, the country's largest military base, celebrated the arrival of spring in the way that they, as witches, enjoy. They prayed to the goddess Freya and then leapt over a fire straight into battle with Rep. Bob Barr, the Georgia Republican. In Barr's view, allowing these ceremonies "sets a dangerous precedent that could easily result in all sorts of bizarre practices being supported by the military under the rubric of 'religion.' What's next? Will armored divisions be forced to travel with sacrificial animals for Satanic rituals?"

Democratic congressman Chet Edwards from, riskily, Waco thinks that's wrong. He is quoted as having "serious differences with the philosophy and practices" of the witches, "but it would be terrible policy to require each installation commander to define what is a religion."

The Army, perhaps remembering the success of earlier pagan militaries (Roman Legions, 300 Spartans, the Mongol Horde), would appear to agree with Edwards. It has worked out an accommodation with the witches, or "Wiccans," as they prefer to be known. Wicca is recognized as a bona fide religion by the Army. Puzzled padres need only turn to the Army chaplain's handbook, *Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups*, for

Mr. Stuttaford is a writer based in New York.

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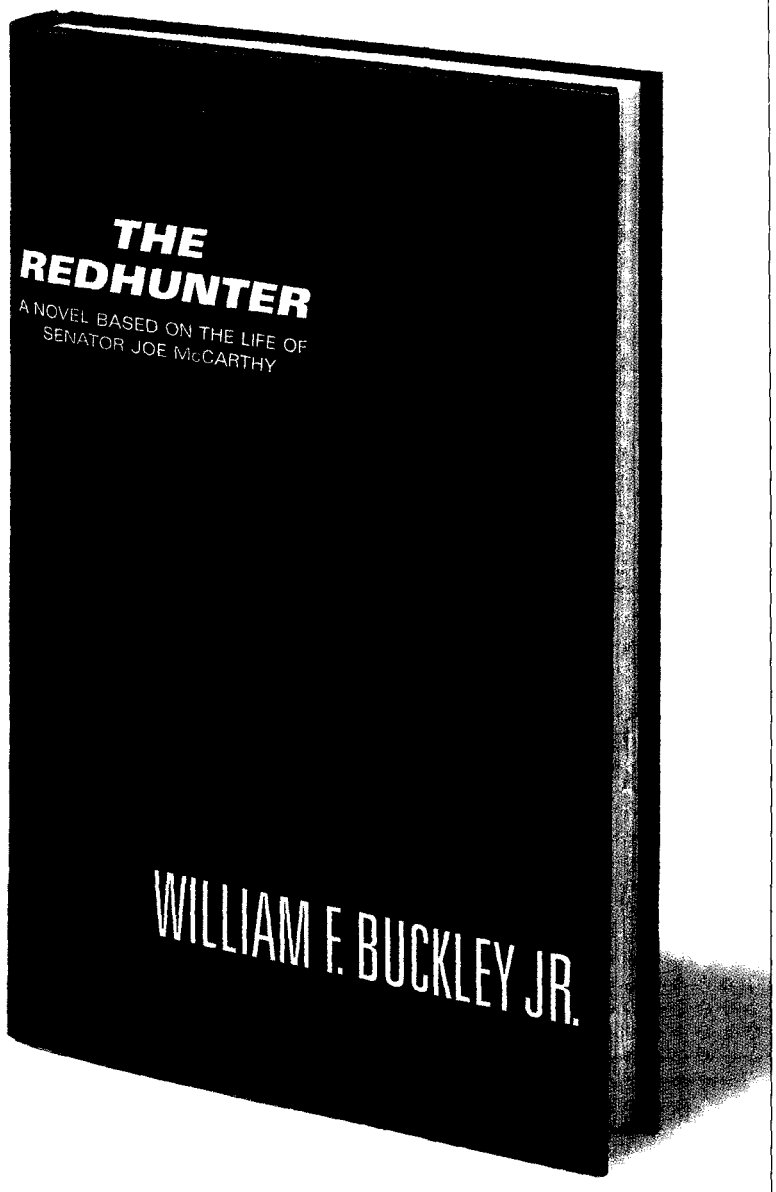

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guidance on how to deal with recruits who wish to put the war in warlock.

The Army is not alone. Wicca has been recognized as a religion by such authorities as the IRS, Michael Dukakis, and, of course, the courts. In *Dettmer* v. *Landon* (1985), the District Court of Virginia noted that Wicca "is clearly a religion for First Amendment purposes," a view that was upheld by the appeals court. That case concerned the right of prisoners to Wiccan ceremonies. More recently, Crystal Seifferly won her legal battle to be allowed to wear her pentacle, a Wiccan symbol, to high school in Michigan. Michael Dukakis? When governor of Massachusetts, he appointed Laurie Cabot the official Witch of Salem.

Which is a safer job than it used to be. In modern America, witchcraft is out of the broom closet and onto the Internet (with over 2,000 websites). The old popular image of Oz's Wicked Witch is melting, melting away, replaced by the sirens of Eastwick, the girls on TV's *Charmed*, and Nicole Kidman and Sandra Bullock in *Practical Magic*. ABC has a hit with *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. Even Willow, the sensible one in the, er, cult show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, turns out to be a follower of Wicca. Among teenage girls, there's a Generation Hex, with witches becoming something of a role model.

And Wicca is big business. Its books sell well (the *Supermarket Sorceress's Enchanted Evenings* offers "75 simple spells from supermarket ingredients"). And many cities and towns can boast a supernatural store or two, even Brookland, Ark. (pop: 1,000), where some locals are protesting the opening of Dagda's Cauldron Occult Shop. But don't worry: If Dagda's not around, there's always mail order ("Enchantments, Inc.," say) for your Hemlock Bark, Twinkle Toes incense, and Squint Oil ("will bring home a straying mate. Secretly sprinkle on clothes").

How many witches are there in America? Accurate calculations are hard to come by (the Canadians, who like to count these sorts of things, recorded 5,500 "pagans" in their last census), but it is generally estimated that there are around 50,000 Wiccans in the United States, a total that is said to be growing fast.

This might surprise poor Bob Barr. Citing an image of George Washington at prayer, the congressman managed to suggest that witchcraft was somehow un-American. He could not be more wrong. For if ever a religion was tailor-made for a contemporary America in full flight from the Enlightenment and the Founding Fathers, it is Wicca.

It is, first of all, bogus. Its origins, we are told, stretch back to the dawn of time, to an age when men worshipped the Goddess. This explains why so many Wiccans communicate in Hobbitspeak, with olde worlde talk of Athanes, Stangs, Runes, Summerland, and scrying-glass. In fact, much of Wicca has a different source: the ancient and fabled culture that was Britain in the 1950s,

Roman Genn

where numerous Wiccan rites were thought up by one Gerald Gardner, a retired civil servant with a reported interest in nudism and flagellation. (So Wicca is approximately as old as Kwanzaa.)

But there was only so much that Gardner could do. He did put forward a few principles (such as the idea that anything one does, good or bad, will be repaid threefold), a bit of nature worship, and some "magick" (spelled with a *k* to distinguish it from the David Copperfield variety). In essence, though, he left his religion as something of a blank slate. Transplanted across the Atlantic, it was perfect for a society that attaches a cachet to "spirituality" but where many people don't want the inconvenience of difficult rules or dogma.

So, no coven has a monopoly on Wiccan truth. If you don't like one proposition, just find another, or set out on your own as a "solitary." To be sure, some more general principles are evolving. Lacking much of a structure, Wicca has proved even more susceptible to the fads and fancies of the late 20th century than its more conventional competitors. It tends to be loopily feminist (if you are a man, don't even think about going to the Circle of Aradia's Goddess Campout) and gushingly environmentalist.

And, temptingly, it is a fantasy so much more exciting than humdrum reality. All those Smiths and Browns and Joneses can reinvent themselves as Mountainwaters, Summerwinds, and Willowsongs. Best of all (this is America), new Wiccans become automatic victims, complete with their own personal holocaust. The old European witch manias have been dubbed the "burning times." Of course, most of those killed were not witches in any sense of the word, but no one seems to mind.

What they do care about is the privileged status this supposed victimhood might give them in our grievance society ("warlock," by the way, is held to be a derogatory term, so be careful). The old witch's cackle is being replaced with the litigant's whine. Bill O'Reilly of Fox News ran into complaints from the Military Pagan Network (an actual group, complete with its own website) when, in discussing the Fort Hood controversy, he insensitively referred to a "Bradley Fighting Broomstick."

After the recent tempest in a cauldron in Massachusetts, he should have known better. There, the unflattering image of a witch contained in a campaign ad run by Gov. Paul Cellucci helped provoke protests (there were, to be fair, more complex issues involved) by the Witches' League for Public Awareness and the attendance of 75 witches at one of the gubernatorial debates. Still, Cellucci won the election. **NR**

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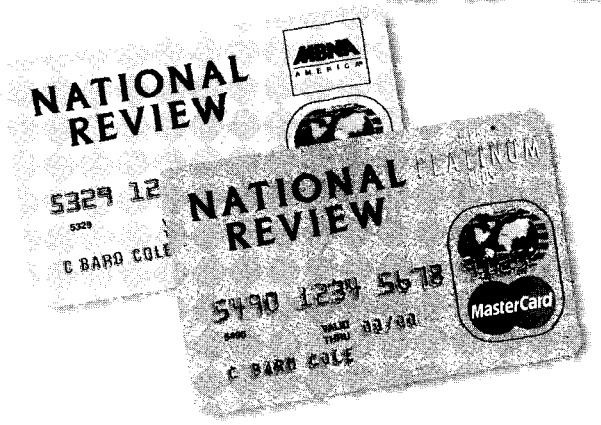

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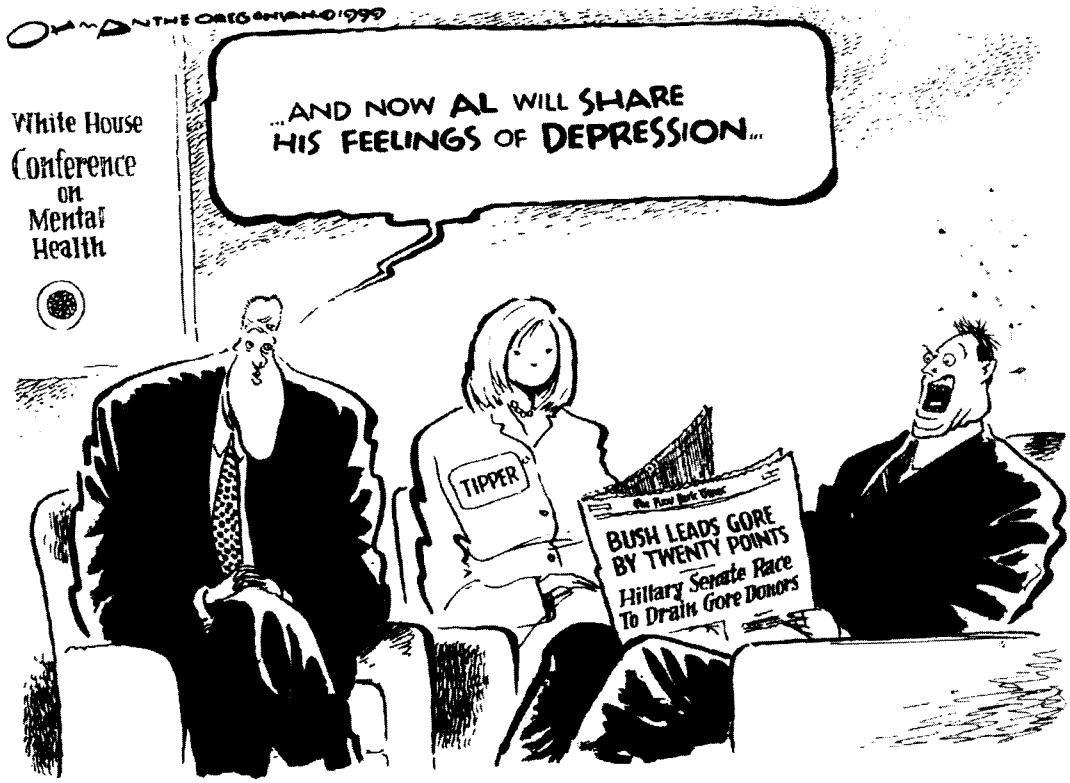
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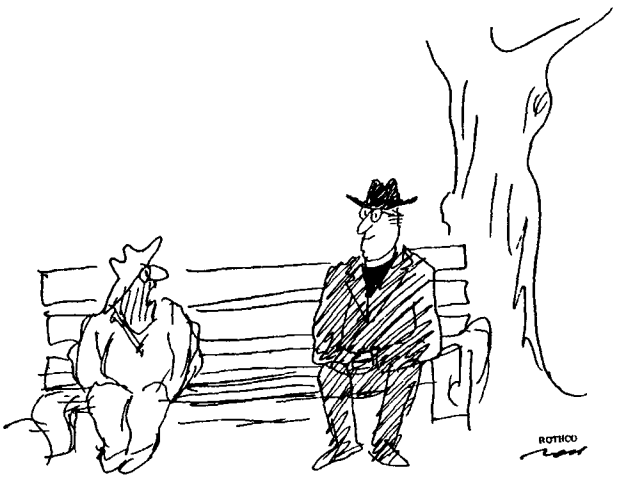

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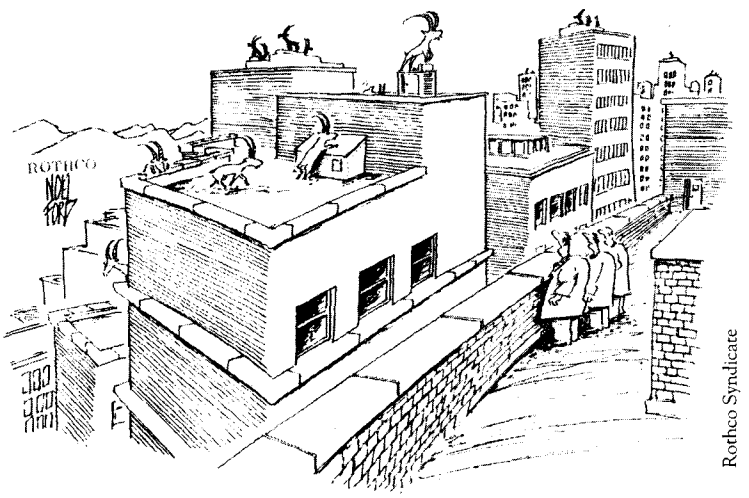

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Mr. Right

The conservative case for George W.

RALPH REED

IN Republican circles, the common rationale for nominating George W. Bush for president is, "We have to win"—an understandable sentiment. After eight years of Clinton-Gore, there is a palpable yearning among GOP activists for a Republican in the White House.

In purely electoral terms, the case for Bush's candidacy is formidable. He is the first governor of Texas this century to be elected to consecutive terms. In 1998, on his way to a landslide reelection, he won an estimated 49 percent of the Hispanic vote, 27 percent of the black vote, and 66 percent of the women's vote. His charisma is Reaganesque, and his stump skills are already legendary.

Bush's lead over Al Gore in recent national polls ranges from about 17 to 25 points. He beats Gore even among women and independents, and he is out front in every state except Hawaii, New York, and the vice president's own Tennessee. This margin will no doubt tighten, but a much larger percentage of Bush supporters than Gore supporters say they are certain to vote for their man. Also, Bush will have the funds to win. He is expected to shatter the record for fundraising when he files his latest finance report on June 30, banking over $18 million—more than twice the amount likely to be raised by his nearest GOP challenger.

Yet for all this overwhelming sense of inevitability, the strongest case for Bush is based on his conservatism, not his viability. He is, in fact, the most electable conservative presidential candidate in a generation. More conservative than his father, George W. has a proven record of conservative accomplishment that the media have largely ignored. A Bush victory in November 2000 would be a conservative triumph, not a moderate one.

Many conservatives are understandably wary of another Bush in the White House. But while Gov. Bush is apparently a loyal son, he has blazed his own trail and has his own ideas. When asked what he thinks of his father's 1990 tax hike, he replies, "It was a big mistake by a good guy."

His conservative preferences are reflected in the advisors he has chosen. Nowhere to be seen are the likes of Richard Darman, President Bush's budget director and a conservative bogeyman. Instead, George W. has tapped Larry Lindsey, a Reaganite and supply-sider, as his top economic advisor. Another advisor is Indianapolis mayor Steve Goldsmith, a celebrated tax-cutter and supporter of faith-based alternatives to welfare. Bush has also consulted Marvin Olasky, whose book *The Tragedy of American Compassion* provided the intellectual framework for conservative welfare reform.

Bush's beliefs are clearly rooted in his Christian faith. After giving up drinking at age 40, Bush had a conversation with Billy Graham that caused him, in his words, to "search my heart and recommit my life to Jesus Christ." It led him to begin reading the Bible and praying daily. He recently told the members of a Baptist church in Houston, "I firmly believe in the power of intercessory prayer, and I know I could not do my job without it." Among his strongest supporters are conservative evangelical leaders. Jerry Falwell is a good friend, though he has yet to issue a public endorsement.

Bush's faith is responsible for his emphasis on "compassionate conservatism." He obviously believes that we should care for the less fortunate and "leave no one behind." When pressed, though, he never advocates government as the source of compassion. He emphasizes cutting taxes, reforming welfare, strengthening the family, and unleashing faith-based and charitable "armies of compassion."

The conservative agenda, let's admit, could use a friendlier face. Republican setbacks on Capitol Hill have made clear that conservatives cannot govern the country from Congress. Bush fashions himself a conciliator and has demonstrated an ability to govern effectively with a Republican senate and a Democratic house in Texas. With a

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GOP Congress, he would be even better positioned to lead.

As president, Bush would prod Congress to move on his priorities: cutting taxes, modernizing entitlements, and restoring values. As governor, he signed the largest tax cut in state history in 1997, a $1 billion property-tax rollback. In 1999, he pushed through the state legislature an even larger tax cut of nearly $2 billion, a parental-notification bill on abortion, and a bill ending "social promotion" in the schools. He also championed a $25 million initiative that included funds for an abstinence campaign—a program he believes will not only dramatically reduce teen pregnancy and abortions, but usher in "a new era of responsibility."

As to abortion, Bush's views have been consistently pro-life. He favors, again, parental-consent laws, a ban on partial-birth abortion, and ultimately a constitutional amendment. He supports the pro-life plank in the Republican platform as a laudable statement of the party's principles. He recently recorded a videotaped statement to this effect that satisfied officials of the National Right to Life Committee. Small wonder he has attracted the support of some of the most respected pro-life leaders in the party, including Rep. Chris Smith of New Jersey.

Bush recently took hits from the right for refusing to promise that he would require his Supreme Court nominees to commit to overturning *Roe* v. *Wade*. But no Republican presidential nominee has ever made such a pledge. Instead, Bush says he will appoint judges who reflect his conservative views—solid constructionists who will "strictly interpret the Constitution, as opposed to using the bench to legislate." According to judicial ethics, judges who promised in advance to vote against *Roe* would be required to recuse themselves from any decision, defeating the whole purpose of the pledge. Indeed, Clarence Thomas—who said in testimony under oath before the Senate Judiciary Committee that he did not know how he would rule on *Roe*—never met this requirement and could not have been confirmed if he had.

On gun control, Bush favors instant criminal background checks but opposes mandatory trigger locks or other attempts to eviscerate the Second Amendment. In the aftermath of the Littleton tragedy, he instinctively gave sound answers, asserting that the most effective gun control is locking up violent criminals who commit crimes with guns. He has vowed to Americans for Tax Reform that he would not raise taxes. He supports a missile-defense system and has boasted that he doesn't believe in "the new world anything" (a reference to the "new world order" associated with his father).

And most refreshingly, Bush has shown a willingness to engage his liberal foes. In 1998, he filed a brief to deny a group of trial lawyers a multibillion-dollar payoff as part of the state's tobacco settlement. He made tort reform a central issue in his first campaign for governor in 1994, and it appears likely he will do so in his presidential campaign. He has been highly critical of Bill Clinton's tendency to "subcontract out public policy to the trial lawyers." This aggressiveness, as much as his stands on the issues, is vital to the future of conservatism.

Even where Bush occasionally disappoints some conservatives, such as on racial preferences, the distance is bridgeable. He maintains that his vision for racial harmony is based on privately led "affirmative access," not government-mandated "affirmative action." At the University of Texas, Bush-appointed trustees phased out quotas but saw the number of

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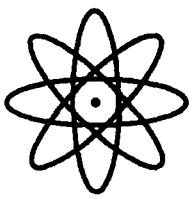

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minority applicants rise with energetic recruiting efforts.

Critics argue that Bush is running a campaign of platitudes, not specifics. In fact, he has indicated precisely where he stands on taxes, abortion, gun control, and Kosovo. A presidential campaign is like an Apollo rocket launch: It arcs across the sky in booster-like stages. Bush has passed through the exploratory and announcement stages, and will flesh out his positions with ten-point plans and the like in a series of major speeches this fall. No presidential candidate releases his budget plan in his announcement speech; he must first establish broad themes and introduce himself to the electorate.

Bush understands the Republican nomination must be earned and not inherited. And he is prepared to earn it by making clear that, in his words, "I won't use my office as a mirror to reflect public opinion. And I'll be guided by conservative principles." NATIONAL REVIEW's William Rusher once observed that Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan believed the same things—only Goldwater said them with a frown, while Reagan said them with a smile. Bush believes what conservatives believe, *and* he will give conservatism a smile again. That will make all the difference. **NR**

Leap of Faith

How W. injected religion into public life.

JOE LOCONTE

JUST as Bill Clinton once declared the era of big government over, Al Gore now claims that the "hollow secularism" of liberal government has run its course.

In this, he pays homage to his chief rival, George W. Bush. The Texas governor has made the charitable work of churches and other religious groups the engine of his "compassionate conservative" agenda. Indeed, no political leader has used his bully pulpit more effectively to give religion a central role in reversing cultural decay. In the process, Bush has set off a bold—and risky—experiment in church-state cooperation, one that is likely to become an important issue in the presidential race.

During a recent interview, Bush explained his rationale: "I'll put it to you this way: Republicans have asked for the welfare system as we know it to be dismantled. The question is, Will we promote, encourage, and foster social entrepreneurship to take the place of government?"

Bush's challenge echoes one made a decade ago by Marvin Olasky, author of *The Tragedy of American Compassion*. Olasky argued that conservatives should reclaim compassion from the Left—not by enlarging the welfare state, but by taking a cue from the poverty-fighters of the 19th century, who emphasized character and faith. "The better you understand what real, Biblical compassion demands of the poor and those helping the poor, the more conservative you are in terms of social policy," says Olasky, now an informal advisor to Bush.

In 1996, Bush became the first governor to issue an executive order prohibiting state agencies from snubbing or secularizing religious charities. He assembled a task force charged with unprying the state's regulatory grip on faith-based groups. He intervened in behalf of Teen Challenge, a Bible-based drug-rehab center in San Antonio, when a state agency tried to shut it down for not bowing to state licensing rules. Today the organization is mostly free from state oversight.

Bush passed legislation in 1997 that promotes prison ministries, deregulates religious drug-treatment programs, and allows child-care centers, most of them church-based, to seek private accreditation. And, in the most recent legislative session, he pushed through a religious-liberty bill that makes it harder for government to muzzle religious expression. "Every time I hear the governor speak, he brings up religious programs and the importance of them," says Jim Heurich, the executive director of Teen Challenge. "It's not only had an impact on us, but on every faith-based organization in Texas."

Some conservatives worry that state support invites state control. Experience is on their side: Charities on the public dole tend to look just like their government counterparts—therapeutic, judgment-free, and secular. Bush is clearly alive to the dangers. "There's a huge reluctance by people of faith to interface with government for fear of having to lose their mission," he says. "But government's role is to provide fertile ground for those entrepreneurs to flourish."

Central to his strategy is the "charitable choice" provision of the 1996 welfare law, which prohibits government from bleaching the religious content from programs that receive federal money. At Bush's order, the Texas Department of Human Services added the law's protections to all of its contracts with private providers. Claims department official Elizabeth Darling Seale: "We have altered the whole environment of an enormous agency."

This approach is beginning to bear fruit. Bush's plan to voucherize welfare services—inviting more congregations to provide child care, job training, and housing—is catching on with agencies throughout the state. Lutheran Social Services recently won a contract to train church volunteers as mentors who help keep ex-welfare recipients employed. At least two dozen religious drug-treatment centers have secured exemptions from state licensing laws, while a peer-review group has formed to grant private accreditation. The newly created Texas Association of Christian Child-Care Agencies is helping day-care providers bypass state rules unrelated to health and safety.

At Bush's invitation, Prison Fellowship has set up a Christian prison—the first in the United States—within a state facility. Privately funded and completely voluntary, the 18-month regimen makes Christian conversion and character training its explicit goal. The program is being hailed as a powerful way to cut recidivism rates among convicted felons.

Mike Doyle of the Cornerstone Assistance Network, a coalition of 120 churches helping the homeless, is a convert to the new thinking. "I considered government the enemy, but

Mr. Loconte is William E. Simon Fellow at the Heritage Foundation and a commentator on religion for National Public Radio.

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God and the governor convinced me I was wrong," he says. Bush named him to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, where he helps broker deals between state agencies, city officials, and local congregations. "I'm there to convince the churches they don't need to be afraid of government, that we need to be back in the game."

Bush's approach is not without its paradoxes: He opposes using taxpayer money to proselytize, yet argues that "transforming hearts" is the key to rebuilding families and communities. But his record on religious charities gives content to the otherwise ambiguous slogan of "compassionate conservatism." "Government can do things," Bush says. "It can rally a military, provide money, write checks. But what we cannot do is change people's hearts." It is impossible, he argues, to usher in "the responsibility era" without the moral and spiritual resources of religious communities. Faith as civic virtue—an impeccably conservative idea.

It's also one that Al Gore can't fully embrace. Liberals are not prepared to take government's limits seriously, and Bush's compassion comes with a moral edge lacking in its liberal counterpart. Nor is Gore likely to back religious groups when disputes arise over hiring policies or government rules against religious expression. Supporting faith-based groups would, after all, force Gore to challenge Clinton-appointed judges and Justice Department officials.

Gore's recent talk of a church-state "partnership" already has liberals fretting about a "theocracy" from the soup kitchens. If public money flows to a program that is "overtly religious," warns Julie Segal of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, "then we're going to sue." What does Gore think of that? He may think he's stolen an issue from George W., but he may find that defending the faithful costs more than he bargained for. **NR**

W. as Campaigner

Tests that Bush has passed.

JOHN J. MILLER

LISTEN to George W. Bush's naysayers, and it sounds like the governor of Texas is a political novice about to run an amateur-hour campaign for president. "Republicans want a winner, but Gov. Bush is totally untested," complains Lamar Alexander. Adds Pat Buchanan: "It's not unusual for hot front-runners to get into trouble, especially for one as untested as Bush." Even Republicans who aren't running against Bush have their doubts. "I have nothing against George Bush," says David Keene of the American Conservative Union, "but he is totally untested nationally."

Keene has a point: Bush has never before faced the national electorate. But the same could be said of most of the other candidates: Gary Bauer and Elizabeth Dole have not previously run for any office at all, and Rep. John Kasich, Sen. John McCain, and Sen. Bob Smith have never faced voters outside their home states. To the extent that Alexander and Buchanan have—they've participated in a few GOP primaries—they're experienced at losing. At best, Alexander, Buchanan, and Steve Forbes have faced a few pop quizzes, with decidedly mixed results. The only Republican in the race who has truly faced a national test is Dan Quayle. But nobody thinks he can win.

What would satisfy Bush's doubters and make them believe he's been "tested"? Do they think he would be a better candidate today if, in addition to his two gubernatorial victories in the country's second most populous state, he had a couple of terms in the Senate under his belt? Or if he had run unsuccessfully in the 1996 primaries? Maybe his detractors think he should lose the nomination next year—so he can be a *really* strong candidate in 2004. And tested!

Bush's swing through Iowa and New Hampshire in early June had the trappings of a maiden voyage, but Bush is no rookie. He has plenty of firsthand political experience, from participating in his father's races—starting with an unsuccessful Senate bid in 1970—to his own gubernatorial runs in 1994 and 1998. "He's a natural campaigner," says Kevin Moomaw of the New Mexico GOP, who worked closely with Bush in Texas during the 1988 presidential contest. "We did about 300 events together. He was a very popular surrogate speaker for his father, and he always worked the room like a veteran politician." Bush has learned about the mechanics of campaigning at almost every level and from several vantage points. This experience

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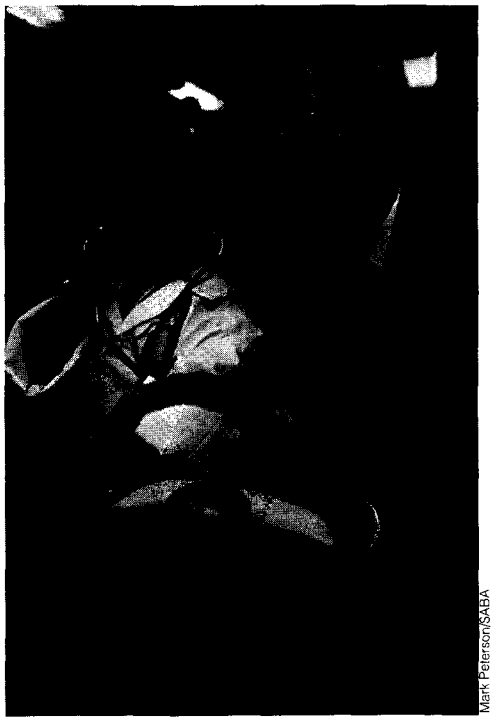
not only shows that he's a "tested" candidate, but also suggests patterns that will emerge during his run for the White House.

In 1988, Bush did more than shake hands and ask people to vote for his dad. He was deeply involved in the race, even moving his family to Washington and setting up an office in the campaign headquarters (where he kept a spittoon behind his desk). One of his chief duties was to keep emerging celebrities like strategist Lee Atwater and media guru Roger Ailes loyal to the Bush family. He also learned a lesson about the politics of personal destruction, playing a key role in quashing gossip about his father. Whispers about an affair started making the rounds in Washington a year before the election, and none of the campaign's hired guns felt comfortable confronting their boss about it. Bush then approached his father privately and popped the question. Nothing to it, the vice president told his son—a conversation Atwater subsequently leaked to the press, silencing the rumor mill.

It was back in 1978 that Bush had gotten his first taste of hardball politics—in west Texas, when he ran for Congress. His Democratic opponent, Kent Hance, successfully portrayed Bush as an elitist carpetbagger with suspicious connections, via his father, to the Trilateral Commission. Bush lost, but managed a respectable 47 percent. (Today Hance is a Republican and Bush supporter.)


Mark Peterson/SABA

It was also in that year that Bush revealed his tendency to wage positive campaigns—something he would go on to do in his statewide races and can be expected to do as he runs for president. Although his associates say Bush approved of Atwater's decision to use negative advertising in the Bush–Dukakis campaign of 1988, it's a strategy the son himself has avoided. He may have even paid a price for this reluctance in that 1978 congressional race.

Then, Hance sent a letter to voters criticizing Bush for an ad in the Texas Tech newspaper promising free beer at a campaign event. The letter, which began "Dear Fellow Christians," said that Bush meant "to persuade young college students to vote for and support him by offering free alcohol." This, it admonished, did not indicate "high character." At the time, Bush knew that Hance had a financial interest in a Lubbock bar frequented by Tech students, but he chose not to expose his opponent as a hypocrite. "In retrospect I probably should have counterattacked," said Bush in 1994.

Bush had another opportunity to return punches in 1994 and, again, refrained. Democratic governor Ann Richards was a popular incumbent, while little about Bush was known except his name. Bush had every incentive to launch attack ads, a standard strategy for someone in his position. Richards herself couldn't resist the low road. She publicly labeled Bush a "jerk" and called Republicans "mongers of hate." Perhaps these were efforts to light Bush's famous temper—something Gore's bombastic rhetoric will aim to do next year—but Bush wouldn't cooperate. Richards had won office in 1990 partly because her opponent had appeared to act in an ungentlemanly way toward a lady. Bush avoided making the race personal and coasted to victory, winning almost every region of the state and cutting deeply into Richards's advantage among women. He topped that performance in his reelection last year, another campaign free of negative ads. Bush captured nearly 70 percent of the popular vote and more than 40 percent support among Hispanics. Between the two races, he raised roughly $30 million and attracted close to 5 million votes.

Still other insights into Bush's presidential run can be gleaned from his earlier races. In 1993, Karl Rove, the governor's top political advisor, penned a strategy memo declaring his intention to screen Bush from the press until he had had time to find his footing as a candidate. In recent months, Bush has been largely unavailable to the national media, refusing to step outside Texas until just the other week and shunning the cable talk shows his rivals can't pass up. In his two runs for governor, he debated his opponent only once. That made sense last year, when he held a huge lead in the polls over challenger Gary Mauro, but not in 1994, when he was himself running against a popular incumbent. "He avoids debates," confirms Tom Pauken, former head of the Texas GOP (and a Bush critic).

Bush is already ignoring a demand by Steve Forbes to engage in a series of monthly debates with the other GOP candidates. This is expected—no candidate in his position wants to diminish his standing by sharing a stage with eight or nine also-rans. Yet the reluctance does highlight the Bush team's preference for managed events. Strict control will be a hallmark of Bush's campaign, and it may even verge on the obsessive. Since last fall, for example, his deputies have snapped up dozens of hostile Internet-domain names, such as "www.bushbites.com," to stymie those who would create satirical webpages.

Bush also will manage his message carefully, focusing on a few carefully chosen issues. It's too soon to say what he will campaign on as 2000 approaches, but his advisors say the short list of topics includes tax reduction, Social Security reform, national defense, and ushering in a new culture of personal responsibility. He is also expected to deliver a major address in Silicon Valley on technology issues before the summer is over.

Of course, front-running candidates usually have a near-death experience—often in New Hampshire—and Bush is probably no exception. He will make mistakes, maybe even big ones. But they won't come from inexperience, no matter what the pundits or Bush's opponents say. They will occur because no candidate is perfect and no campaign is error-free. It may be possible to imagine more "tested" candidates than Bush, such as Ronald Reagan in 1980 or Bush's own father in 1988. Yet it's also possible to imagine less "tested" ones—such as, say, just about every other candidate in the Republican field. **NR**

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Bush Again

New Bush, same as the old Bush.

RICHARD BROOKHISER

MANY conservatives are looking forward to a Bush ascendancy.

Part of the reason, as John J. Miller pointed out in these pages ("Bush's League," Dec. 21, 1998), is that Bush has been looking to them for advice. "I knew he had read my book *Destructive Generation*," on the evils of the '60s, said David Horowitz, "because he had referred to it in some of his speeches. But I wasn't expecting the call" to meet with him. Paul Weyrich agreed. Bush "is not an intellectual in the sense he cares about issues philosophically. But he's very curious who's on which side, and why. Jack Kemp already knew everything; Bob Dole was cynical. George Bush has a certain naïveté that is refreshing. One can bring him pieces of information which he seems interested in absorbing." Newt Gingrich, viewing the Bush campaign from afar, called it "the most open bureaucracy I've ever worked with."

Politicians point to a record of putting the information he has absorbed to good use. "He has cut taxes, improved schools, and reformed welfare," said Michigan governor John Engler, who has endorsed him. "He's a builder, a doer, a winner." Former New Hampshire governor John Sununu, now backing Dan Quayle, agreed: "On issues conservatives say are important to them, he has gone well past what could be called lip service. Bush . . . has become a strong advocate for that agenda."

Many supply-side economists have signed up with other campaigns, so they will not say anything favorable on the record. But one who is no die-hard enemy of Bush's admits that Bush "has held a significant office which makes him sensitive to populist political crosscurrents. He will be loath to raise taxes because he knows the middle class will loathe it." Jude Wanniski, never shy about giving his opinions, said flatly, "I'm fairly upbeat about a Bush administration."

What about the "compassionate conservative" label, attacked by Bush's rivals as so much hot air? Myron Magnet, editor of *City Journal*, the New York-based policy forum, defended its specificity. "Bush has just set up four pilot residential hostels for welfare mothers and their babies—tough-love institutions, not handouts for the irresponsible." Sununu made the same point. "Bush worked aggressively to present a program that would spend money, not on the child-care industry, but on children."

Abortion is one great sticking point. Before he died, Jim McFadden, editor of *The Human Life Review*, fretted that "the

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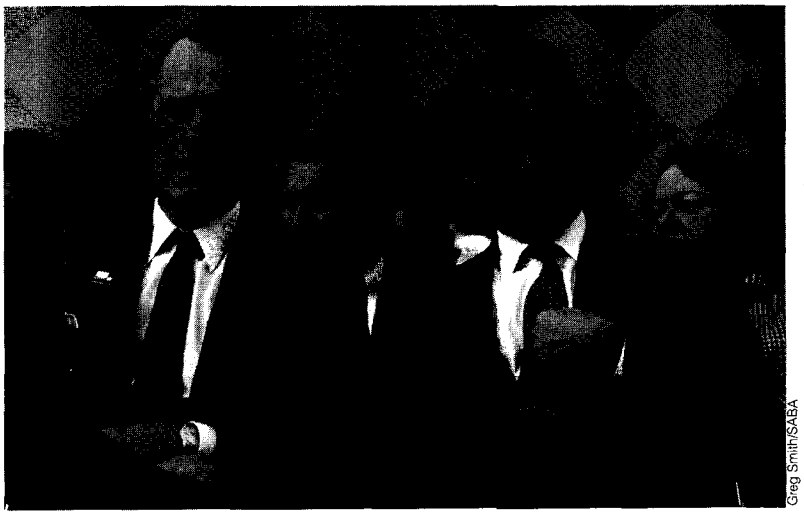
message he exudes to the activists is that it's an issue he doesn't care about." Maria McFadden, his daughter, agreed, and pointed to a *catholic eye* poll that showed Pat Buchanan as the favorite of four out of five respondents, with Steve Forbes coming in second. But one *eye* reader made the pragmatic point in a letter to the editor that it was "Buchanan's fault that Clinton won. If you insist on perfection, you may get the worst."

Call it guarded optimism, or feeble pessimism: It seems to be a common mood about Bush on the right wherever actual commitments to other candidates have not been made—and sometimes (as in the case of the anonymous economist) even where they have.

You could also call it déjà vu, because this is exactly what conservatives thought about George W.'s father, as he steamed to victory, first over his divided primary opposition, then over Michael Dukakis. Indeed, only half of the above statements were made to me, to other reporters, or to the public about George W.; the rest are from a story I wrote for NR ("The Establishment Man," Nov. 7, 1988) about George Bush (see the box at the end, for the list of who said what, when). I could have ladled in more quotations from the eleven-year-old piece, except that they would have been dead giveaways. Burt Pines, then with the Heritage Foundation: "Does Bush know in his gut that SDI is important because it reduces the Soviet Union from a superpower to a big Third World country? I don't know. On the other hand, Bush understands the arguments [for it] in a way Reagan doesn't."


Greg Smith/SABA

Why should father and son elicit such a similar response from conservatives, more than a decade apart? George W. is a gracious, personable man; so was George (I wrote speeches for Vice President Bush in 1982, so I know this from experience as well as report). George W. has reached out to intellectuals and politicians of the Right; so did George, as the 1988 election cycle loomed. Most important, George W. looks like a winner, and as the reader of *catholic eye* noted, winning, even without your heart's desire, can be a lot better than losing. Eleven years ago, George, Reagan's loyal vice president and heir apparent, looked like a winner too. Politeness, flattery, and the prospect of success each by itself can move men; together, they are an almost irresistible attraction.

The more important question, though, is not whether conservatives are the same, but whether the two Bushes are.

If George W. Bush becomes president, the Bushes will be the first father/son pair of presidents since John and John Quincy Adams. As with the Adamses, only the middle names will change. Crazy John Randolph, who hated both Adamses, thought there was little to choose between them: He called them the American House of Stuart, and said that "the cub" was worse than the old bear.

There are more political dynasties in America than egalitarian dogma would suggest (Frelinghuysens have been representing New Jersey in Congress, on and off, since the 1770s) and people are right to look for continuities in political families. Dramatic switches, as from Thomas Dodd the anti-Communist to Christopher Dodd the pro-Sandinista, are rare. But a political family's profile can also evolve over time. John Adams destroyed his party with his foreign-policy flounderings as president. But John Quincy prudently and honestly switched parties before he rose to the White House.

Some things about the Bushes are unchanged in the second generation. The effort to deny the background of privilege is equally stubborn, and equally vain. George W., we are told over and over again, is a son of Midland, Texas. Just so, we were told that George moved to Midland, Texas. Texas functions in the Bush family myth as a cleansing populist touchstone—a WASP Ellis Island. Why do they go through these gyrations? The son, like the father, was born to wealth and prominence; George W. would never have been cut into the Texas Rangers baseball team if he had been George W. Shlepperman. Gov. Bush should stop worrying about his opportunities and focus on the opportunities he proposes to give Americans.

Some family traits, on the other hand, may be evolving. George W.'s slogan, "compassionate conservatism," recalls George's hope, expressed in his acceptance speech at the 1988 convention, to preside over a "kinder, gentler" America. But the father's phrase was only a phrase, intended chiefly to distinguish himself from Ronald Reagan. ("Kinder and gentler than who?" Nancy Reagan stage-whispered when she heard it.) George W.'s slogan, uttered months in advance of his hoped-for nomination, offers itself as a vision, a way of refashioning conservatism to face the social and political challenges of the Nineties and the Zeroes. Perhaps the time is ripe. It is certainly true that conservative social policies would be more compassionate than liberal ones, which have produced bad schools and bastardy, and it may be true that voters are tired of angry white men.

George W. better mean something by his phrase. If his friends don't hold him to account, his enemies will. "Gov. Bush signed a concealed-carry law; how compassionate is that?" A good answer can be given, but he had better be prepared to give it.

As families evolve, so does the world. One thing George W. must be ready to do, which George was not, is to expose his personal life. He has a salvation narrative (the drinking, the

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hangover, the wagon) that is designed both to appeal to evangelicals and to explain his pre-saved life only in general terms. Post-Clinton, this will not be enough. George W. will be asked, in detail, about every bad thing he has ever done. His geniality forces honesty upon him. A politician who looked demos in the eye and said, "That is none of your *damned* business," might get away with it. But since George W. will not do that, he must tell all. He should do so voluntarily, perhaps in some church setting, before he is compelled to.

What conservatives fear from George W., despite their happy talk, is incoherence and drift. Seven years of Bill Clinton have made George Bush look a lot better. But President Bush's shortcomings gave Clinton his chance. What counts is not geniality or reaching out or even fine new ideas, but the determination to do something with power, and the ability to explain it. Conservatives should do more than hope for the best from the next Bush; they should insist on it.

KEY

THEN—GINGRICH, JIM MCFADDEN, SUNUNU, WANNISKI, WEYRICH
NOW—ANONYMOUS, ENGLER, HOROWITZ, MAGNET, MARIA MCFADDEN

NR

President W.

A review of Richard Darman's *Second Term*, a 2005 memoir.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

It was said by the British politician Enoch Powell that all political careers end in failure, except those cut off in their prime. Mr. Darman's second volume of memoirs raises, however, the sad possibility that some careers end in failure even when cut off in their prime—notably, of course, that of Mr. Darman's boss, President George W. Bush.

It is hard to recall now the scenes of Republican rejoicing that attended the coronation of "George the Second" (as a bitter Al Gore took to calling him in the last stages of Campaign 2000.) Here at last was that sturdy oxymoron—a Republican winner. He arrived in Washington having succeeded not only in uniting the American people in a landslide victory but also in the far more difficult task of uniting the GOP. Supply-siders, defense intellectuals, prolifers, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, the Christian Right—all had fallen beneath his easygoing spell, all were convinced that (secretly of course) he agreed with them, and all thrilled to his inaugural proclamation of a "new future."

"Let us not focus on the past," he had memorably intoned. "Let us focus on the future. The future comes before the past." And they had all felt he was speaking directly to them.

The Christian Right were the first to discover their mistake. Apparently Mr. Bush felt that nominating an Episcopalian woman bishop to the Supreme Court to replace Chief Justice Rehnquist would cleverly satisfy both Christians and feminists. In fact, not only did the Christian Right denounce him as "a gnostic or, worse, a Unitarian," the ACLU sued to prevent the appointment as violating the separation of church and state. The nomination died in the Senate when the bishop's earlier career as a lesbian lapdancer hit the tabloids.

Cultural conservatives were also upset when, after six months in office, the president vetoed a bill to transfer federal funding from bilingual-education programs to English-immersion ones on the grounds that it would offend the vital Hispanic vote. His veto caused such an outcry on the right, however, that he moved to make amends with a bill that would reduce bilingual spending as a percentage of education spending by hiking the education budget in total.

"You wanted to know what we meant by 'compassionate conservatism'? Well, that's what we mean by it," a senior White House aide told the *Washington Post*. Other measures to please the vital Hispanic vote—notably, the IRS audit of Ward Connerly—were instituted as that vote became progressively more vital with the administration's fall in support among all other groups.

"The GOP has a choice," said the president's pollster after the loss of both Houses in the midterm elections. "It can either change its policy on immigration—or its policies on everything else. We've decided on everything else."

For the first 18 months of office, there were few international crises, and foreign policy was on autopilot. Mr. Bush then unveiled a bold new initiative, modeled on his father's foreign policy of ten years before, to build up Germany as the leader of a new independent Europe that would take up America's role in North Africa and the Middle East. In ten years, however, the Germans had changed and the former Green leader Joschka Fischer was now chancellor of a Left-Green coalition. Still, the legendary Bush charm worked again, with the result that the U.S. backed Germany's ecological intervention in Algeria in 2003.

"We Germans must get used to controlling all climates from the Arctic to the Sahara," Chancellor Fischer later remarked at the Casablanca conference that ratified Kyoto III, giving NATO the power to enforce U.N. environmental standards on violators worldwide. He added with a chuckle that Texas had better watch out, to which the president laughingly assented; but of course the Guadalajara Treaty between the European Union and Mexico had not then been broached, let alone signed.

Throughout these political ups and downs, the president's personal popularity had remained high largely because the economy performed well, and the Dow hit 25,000 at the outset of his third year. Then "Black Week" struck, and in due course became "Black Month," and finally "Black Year." Distress returned to America. Former Silicon Valley executives could be found selling hand-held computerized multiple-use communication devices in the street.

These events hit the president hard. As he complained, mystified, to his Treasury secretary: "Have revenues ever

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gone down before?" He lost all confidence in the economic advisors he had brought in largely to dispel conservative suspicions that he would hire Dick Darman, dismissed his entire team—and hired Dick Darman. As Mr. Darman describes the scene in his new book, he arrived to find a White House in disarray. But he quickly restored its (and the president's) morale because he knew exactly what had to be done. He raised taxes across the board and set the U.S. economy on the road to recovery.

It is still, of course, on the road to recovery. One cannot expect things to turn around on cue. Sadly, however, the return to prosperity will come too late to save Mr. Bush's presidency. But he must be given some (qualified) praise for his own imaginative attempt to solve a desperate situation. Drawing on his own business experience, Mr. Bush saw what had to be done for an economy in free fall—and got on the phone to Texas.

Whether the leveraged buyout of the USA by the Euro-Japanese-Texas consortium he and his father assembled would have succeeded we will never know, thanks ironically to the president's own appointee, Ross Perot, who delivered the crucial fifth vote in the Supreme Court's negative judgment. Nor is it certain that Mr. Bush would have been arrested if he had remained in the country.

Most Americans, after all, will wish him well in his new career as a rodeo performer at Euro-Disney. It is somehow fitting that the names of Bush and Clinton will continue to be linked in and out of office. **NR**

Is Los Angeles Doomed?

Some seem to hope so.

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

RECENTLY the *New York Times* reported a type of story that Southern Californians like me know well. It was about earthquakes, and the gist has often been told in newspapers and on national television, each time as if the news really were new. "Seismic Team Detects a Killer Beneath Los Angeles," the front-page headline declaimed. You see, there's this "blind thrust" fault, nine miles deep and right below downtown. Such faults under L.A. have been known for years. To justify front-page treatment, the *Times* needed some fresh angle. Aha! The angle was that geological information long "jealously guarded by oil and gas companies" had been revealed to scientists, who could at last confirm the existence of the "killer" fault.

The type of newspaper article that reports the forthcoming destruction of Los Angeles by earthquake is just a subcategory of another classification, the "L.A. Is Doomed!" article, which may also take the form of a magazine piece, movie, novel, or other book. In these, destruction threatens my hometown by earthquake, flood, fire, volcano, or tornado. It doesn't matter which, since their effects are depicted as interchangeable. Though most of this material is fictional storytelling, let's stipulate that the genre wouldn't be so popular if it didn't somehow satisfy a widespread wish to see the real L.A. in ruins.

Hollywood is a reliable producer of such stuff, as in recent films like *The Crow: City of Angels* (earthquake), *Escape from L.A.* (earthquake), *Independence Day* (evil space aliens), and *Volcano* (volcano). But creative folks have been destroying L.A. for fun and profit for more than half a century. A chapter in Mike Davis's book *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* lists 138 depictions—in movies and novels—of Los Angeles laid waste since 1909.

Scanning this list is like watching boys torture a stray cat: How many ways can they figure out to make it scream? Sometimes destruction comes at Nature's hand. The first instance of L.A. getting washed into the Pacific—"swiftly, relentlessly"—occurred in Myron Brinig's 1933 novel *The Flutter of an Eyelid*. Nathanael West burnt the place down in *The Day of the Locust* (1939), while in the 1954 B-movie *Them!* giant ants consumed the populace. I distinctly remember another film, *Earthquake*. Released in 1974 when I was 9, it introduced Sensurround, a system of large speakers under the theater seats, emitting bass noises famous for terrorizing moviegoers by making their behinds quiver.

Almost as often, L.A. has been subjected to ruination by human evil, whether environmental degradation (*Blade Runner*, 1982), religious cults (Gore Vidal's 1954 *Messiah*), or racial holocaust (as in the popular neo-Nazi fantasy novel *The Turner Diaries*, 1978). Nor have highbrow writers disdained the trashing of Southern California. Mike Davis cites a "quorum" of the region's fanciest authors—Octavia Butler, Carolyn See, Steve Erickson, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Cynthia Kadohata—who have set their novels amid the debris of the city's nightmare future. The best known may be Carolyn See's *Golden Days*, in which, following a nuclear war, a pair of earth-mother gals establish an eco-sensitive matriarchy.

With the publication of *Ecology of Fear* and a previous book, *City of Quartz*, in 1998 and 1990 respectively, Davis himself became the most distinguished example of the creative entrepreneur cashing in on the public's apparent hope that L.A. will be destroyed. For insisting that overdevelopment by nefarious capitalists has set the city on a freeway to ruin, he has been rewarded with a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award ($315,000) and (in the case of *Ecology of Fear*) 14 weeks as an *L.A. Times* bestseller.

Taking Davis as representative of the "L.A. Is Doomed!" school of thought, I wondered what would be revealed by a few days in a rental car, touring some of the localities he describes as being perfumed with the scent of apocalypse. After all, cultural pileups like the pattern described above occur for a reason. This reason tends to have something to do with underlying social dynamics—rather than with chance and randomness alone, as in an auto pileup on the Golden State Freeway where one car spins out of control, another

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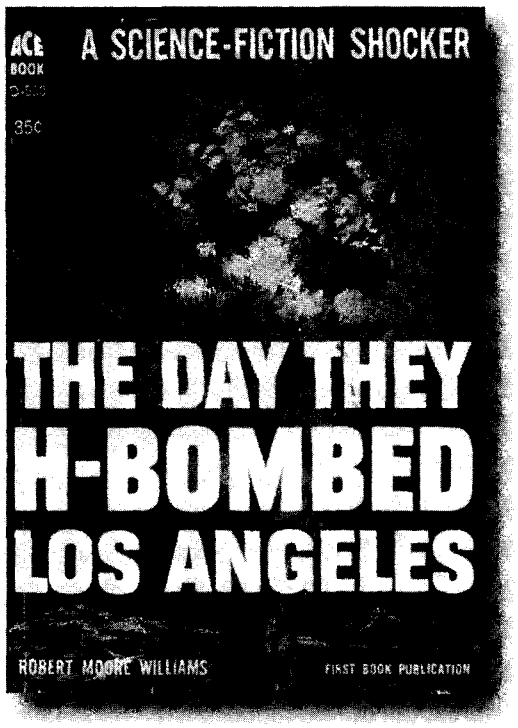
crashes into it, another into that one, and so on. In a culture like our own, beset by symptoms of a spiritual illness, secular liberalism, such phenomena inevitably reveal an aspect of the disease. That's why I flew to Los Angeles for a diagnostic drive.

When you look out the window of an airplane at night over Los Angeles, the city and its environs appear below as an endless grid of light. A rabbi I know says that no view is more conducive to belief in God than the Manhattan skyline, but L.A. must share the honor. There is no grid to be found in the natural world; that pattern can only be a human artifact. As powerfully as the Chrysler and Empire State buildings, Los Angeles by night unfolds at your feet testimony of the divine spark in man. Without that spark there would be no possibility of our triumphing so utterly over nature. The grid turns out to be the key to the diagnosis.

For Davis, triumph over nature is exactly the problem, in particular man's hubris in constructing an enormous city on this location, which is vulnerable to earthquakes, floods, and tornadoes. In his view, greed and a willingness on the part of developers to let poor people shoulder the brunt of the inevitable cycle of natural disasters have guided the city's growth.



As with the "L.A. Is Doomed!" genre in fiction and film, all the exploitation of people and nature leads to a situation of ultimate urban dread. Readers with a taste for such dread, poetically expressed, will enjoy Mike Davis. Wherever he goes the landscape is "eerie," "ghostly." During "the infernal season" from late August to early October, along skyscraper-lined Wilshire Boulevard "homeless people huddle miserably in every available shadow." Police "helicopter gunships" "patrol" the beaches, which are closed after dark. In the "industrial wastelands" of South-Central L.A., "wild dog packs now threaten the lives of small children." In short, "fear eats the soul of Los Angeles."

Oh, does it really? In actual fact, L.A. is a pleasant, livable city from which the aroma of disaster is totally absent. By a quirk, I arrived in the real Los Angeles even before I left New York. An originally L.A. institution called Super Shuttle has recently been grafted onto New York. It'll never work. By nature, New York constantly harasses and impedes you. It does so by means of traffic, crowds of pushy pedestrians, sullen cash-register attendants, passive-aggressive subway Metrocard vendors, telephone-cable disruptions. On the other hand, Los Angeles is a city that works. At stores, the guy or gal behind the register smiles and sincerely wants to help. Freeways mean more freedom from traffic than you might expect. Public utilities can be relied on. It's also much easier to fly in or out because the blue vans called Super Shuttles transport citizens who wish to share a ride to or from the airport, cheaply, efficiently, and pleasantly.

I shared a Super Shuttle ($15), progressing slowly up Manhattan's West End Avenue, with a smartly dressed woman in her 60s and an effeminate man in his 30s. They couldn't get over the Super Shuttle or its driver, who was pleasant in a Los Angeles sort of way. "He's so amiable!" said the effeminate man. "And polite!" said the woman. The man agreed: "It's a lot cheaper than taxis and they speak English!"

Later that day I was really in L.A., specifically Santa Monica, in the latter's beautifully refurbished seaside downtown. Around 10 at night I walked the few blocks to the beach, as I've done lots of times before here, and found as usual the beaches open. *Pace* Mike Davis, it's nearly impossible to "close" a beach. I saw no "helicopter gunships" on "patrol," nor have I ever seen one.

Next day I drove to the rural Santa Clara Valley, in northern L.A. County. On the way I stopped at the old Mission San Fernando, founded in 1797, now in the middle of the valley which bears the mission's name. A photo in the museum there showed the San Fernando Valley as it appeared more than a century ago: empty even of trees, with the little complex of half-ruined mission buildings the only point of visual interest. By the 1930s, the valley was covered by orange groves. By the 1950s it was being rather abruptly filled with tract homes. Nature had been transformed with a speed that makes some visitors uneasy. Mike Davis says he fears that the same fate awaits the Santa Clara Valley and its orange groves.

There is an intoxicating quality to those groves, the colors green and orange being particularly beautiful when juxtaposed in the form of an orange tree and set off by angular brown and green hills. Anyone who cares for natural beauty will be concerned at Davis's news that the Newhall Land & Farming Company plans next year to start construction on a big housing tract where the valley intersects with the 405 Freeway. Then this "last authentic landscape of [the] prewar way of life—Eden's last garden—will be destroyed."

But this is more poetry than reality. It's just not true that the Santa Clara Valley is Southern California's "last garden." One morning when I was there, the *L.A. Times* ran a story about another "last garden." This one, Trabuco Canyon in Orange County, is menaced by zoning changes. But even if Trabuco Canyon were paved over tomorrow, there would still be plenty of wilderness left in the area. One glance at a map on page 203 of *Ecology of Fear*, intended to explain where deadly mountain lions might emerge into suburban tract lanes, makes the point. Los Angeles is gated all the way around by mountain ranges. Their enormous area is immune

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to development because you can't build tract houses on a mountaintop.

Admittedly, apart from the mountains, just about wherever you go the spread of tract developments is striking. L.A.'s doomsayers loathe housing developments. In *City of Quartz*, Davis denounces the Antelope Valley, in the Mojave Desert, where since 1984 there's been a "landrush." The result: "traffic jams, smog, rising crime, job competition, noise, soil erosion, a water shortage and the attrition of a distinctly countrified lifestyle"—along with the despised "gated subdivisions."

I visited the Antelope Valley. Its two main towns, Lancaster and (palmless) Palmdale, are drab and strip-mall infested, patched with wide squares of desert: queer, vaguely retarded-looking Joshua trees and tumbleweeds that haven't yet become detached from the yellow earth. What draws Californians isn't the scenery. They come for the prices, homes in subdivisions for $200,000, about which one can only say it seems rather hardhearted of this self-identified Marxist to deny working families the opportunity to purchase a house they can afford.

In Fontana, a town that gets a chapter to itself in *City of Quartz*, the houses are even cheaper. According to billboards, the cheapest development offers "Large Homes on Large Lots" for $124,950. But Mike Davis is disgusted because Fontana was once a utopian, semi-cooperative community of lemon growers and chicken farmers, decimated by capitalism at the dawn of World War II when Henry Kaiser's steel mill opened. The mill closed in the early Eighties, having reduced the lemon groves to what Joan Didion in an essay once called "the greenery of nightmare." Didion paid special attention to the stones nearby the trees, which "look not like natural stones but like the rubble of some unmentioned catastrophe."

When I went to Fontana, out in the San Bernardino County, I looked hard for Didion's sinister stones, but couldn't find any. In this "junkyard of dreams," as Mike Davis puts it—of dreams junked by capitalism—I looked for the "vast number of dismantled or moribund cars deliberately strewn in people's yards like family heirlooms," but saw only two or three. On Valley Boulevard, I looked for the "boring repetition of adult bookstores," but saw only one ("Fine Adult Entertainment"). Like the homeless crowding "every available shadow" along Wilshire and the beach-patrolling "helicopter gunships," the sinister stones and junked cars and innumerable adult bookstores exist only in the mind of a creative writer.

So then are the many readers of Davis's books stupid, especially the ones who actually live in Los Angeles? No. But locals here are often remarkably ignorant of what might seem to an outsider to be "local" conditions. It's not their fault.

Because of the vastness of metropolitan Los Angeles, one tends to stay in one's own pocket of it. And ignorance here means not bliss but terror, as evidenced by the violence and salaciousness of local TV news, much worse than in New York. Four mornings in a row I watched KTLA, Channel 5. There was the story about a seedy white guy who tried to lure into his car an 11-year-old black boy, Rahssan Davis, who explained to a TV reporter: "I think he was going to kill me! Then he was going to pick up somebody else and kill him too!" There was the half a human brain found by a tow-truck driver in an abandoned car in Van Nuys. There were the three pit bulls found on the loose in South-Central, having escaped from their owners' backyards. In Los Angeles, stories like these don't seem too freakish to bother with because most Angelenos are prepared to believe the worst about prevailing conditions in places they've never seen.

This explains the *how* of the "L.A. Is Doomed!" articles, books, and movies—how residents of L.A., never mind East Coasters, could be so gullible—but not the *why*: why so many people crave hints of apocalypse. Stuff like this is a kind of poetry, and poetry evokes a sentiment that its readers find pleasurable. Just what sentiment that may be is hinted at by the sight of L.A. from the air, that unnatural grid and all it has to tell us about creativity and createdness.

■

Because it was built almost overnight, Los Angeles can't be confused with anything natural.

■

L.A. is the ultimate city of creativity. Of course, one thinks of Hollywood, where the screen universe is brought into existence in a flash out of nothing. Just as important is the grid itself, which didn't exist fifty years ago. Because it was built almost overnight, Los Angeles can't be confused with anything natural. New York was also once a wilderness. But that city and its suburbs grew up gradually. Since there was never an analogue in Brooklyn or Queens for the instantaneous eruption of the suburbanized San Fernando Valley, you can entertain the impression that New York came about organically.

L.A. makes many of us distinctly uncomfortable. In a nation whose spiritual health is troubled by spreading secularism, it must. At a time when high-toned opinion is turned violently against the notion of man as a created being, this city of creativity can't help but give offense. For there could be no real creativity without a Creator. It has been a long-standing belief, suppressed in the past century only through tireless secular propaganda, that one sense in which man is the "image" of God can be found in the first line of Genesis: He created, and so do we. On one reading, the one encouraged by an auto tour of L.A., the cultural conflict that wracks our ailing country comes down to a dispute about creativity. If man has a Creator, then human creativity is our tribute to Him. If man has a Creator, then we urbane Americans must before long reassess our cherished secular assumptions.

The city of creativity thus promotes the formation of neurotic cultural symptoms—"L.A. Is Doomed!" pronounced in hundreds of books, movies, and periodicals—as a defense against the true meaning of creativity. For that part of the public which consumes newspapers like the *New York Times* and books like Mike Davis's, it would be deeply reassuring if such a place were destroyed—whether by earthquake or fire, wild beasts or overdevelopment . . . it really doesn't matter. **NR**

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
AUSTIN, TEXAS

June 20, 1999

Hey Dad!

Did you catch the big Iowa thing? Stood up there on some bales of hay (gesundheit city—but the puffy eyes made me look compassionate) and made my thing! Went over well, I think.

Getting briefed by the best, thanks on that. Got George Shultz down here, giving me the thing on the Kosovenese and the Serbish, which is complicated, but not as complicated as what's-the-deal with the Russians. Shultz totally baffled by Chernomyrdin and those guys. But for some reason I totally get Boris Yeltsin. I've locked into his thing. Now, I'm ready to get it on with the Euros. Shultz is going to tackle them right after lunch. Right now I'm kind of at recess.

Hey, send Jebbie my best. But the school-choice voucher deal is stealing thunder big time. Sure it's a great idea, I think. It's just not something I want to say I know about and think is a good idea and will support. I'd rather just say it's a thing that I know about and think about knowing more to support the thing. So, tell him to lay off.

Keeping it cool about the no-taxes pledge. They tried to get me to sign it, but I just said, "Hey! That's a thing that you know I support without the other thing, so support me on this and we'll do it!" Seemed to work.

So now I'm back in Austin, doing the for-eign-policy homework thing with Shultz. Next week, domestic policy. And a couple of months after that, is the me-talking-about-policy stuff. Hey, as soon as the American people start paying attention, then so will I. The point is to raise 30 million bones before any of that stuff becomes necessary.

Uh, oh. Shultz is coming down the hall right now, and he's got something in his hand. Hope it's not a quiz. Not my thing.

G. W.

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 20, 1999

Dear Rusty,

Well, we're off. Tipper and I flew down to Carthage and made the announcement. Now the world knows: I am running for president!

Before the announcement I had a handful of Tipper's famous trail mix (nuts, seeds, bulghur, oats) and it made my throat kind of dry. So on certain words, I kind of growled out the vowels, trying to dislodge a couple of sticky oats. You know what I mean. Instead of "every child has the right to a safe school," it came out "every ccccchhhhild has the rii-igggccchhhhhtt to a safe school!"

The weird part was, it worked. I sounded "passionate," reporters said. It was a "new Al Gore," they said, which at first I thought was a bad thing, but it turns out that as much as people loved the old one, they love the new one even more!

Also, I'm starting to draw some distinctions between me and Bill. In the sense of letting the American people know that I won't fondle the interns. I think that after eight years of dishonesty (but aside from that, excellent leadership from one of our greatest presidents) the American people are looking for a president who can look them in the eye and say without hesitation that he will not have sexual relations with . . . whomever.

Actually, they already have a president who can do that. It makes the whole idea of looking somebody in the eye seem kind of shifty.

Maybe I should be bolder. Maybe instead of saying that Bill will be regarded as one of our greatest presidents, I should downgrade him a little. From, say, Lincoln/FDR/Washington to, say, TR/JFK/Eisenhower. What do you think?

Your friend, or should I say, your freeec-chhhnd!

Al

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The Second Fall

DAVID GRESS

The First World War, by John Keegan (Knopf, 512 pp., $35)

The Pity of War: Explaining World War I, by Niall Ferguson (Basic, 520 pp., $30)

THE late political philosopher Sidney Hook, though a staunch atheist, referred to the outbreak of World War I as "the second fall of man." The phrasing reflected the profound sense, held by nearly all true democrats who witnessed the effects of that war, that the conflict marked a vast, ominous, and tragic diversion of the course of human history. Before 1914, the liberal principles of free trade, expanding suffrage, and increasing prosperity seemed firmly anchored in not merely the official policies of the great powers, but the very identity and confidence of the peoples of Europe and North America. After 1918, by contrast, Europe sank into stagnation, protectionism, ferocious ideological conflicts, and ultimately a second great war, and the United States withdrew into an isolation that was not broken until Pearl Harbor.

Since the revolutions of 1989 that put an end to Communist power in Europe, historians have begun to speak of the period from 1914–1989 as a "short 20th century," marked by hot or cold war between incompatible ideologies, and above all by a massive assault on liberal democracy, indeed on the entire spirit of

Mr. Gress, a senior fellow of the Danish Institute of International Affairs and the Foreign Policy Research Institute, is the author of *From Plato to NATO: The Idea of the West and Its Opponents.*

liberty, progress, and optimism that characterized the pre-1914 era. Only now, at the end of the 1990s, have international trade and exchange reached the same volume, relative to the GDPs of the great powers, as in 1914. Only now, it appears, is the long deviation finally over.

If, however, the benefits of free trade and self-confident democratic liberalism were as obvious as all that, the great deviation and its trigger, the war of 1914, become almost impossible to explain rationally. They appear either as the violent eruption of repressed barbarism predicted by 19th-century thinkers such as Jacob Burckhardt and Friedrich Nietzsche or, to the religion-minded, as the tragic penalty stemming from the insouciant confidence of those who thought that democracy, prosperity, and free trade were so obviously right that nothing could disturb their onward march.

Although the major questions raised by the war—what caused it, why it lasted so long, how it affected and was affected by culture, economics, and ideology—have been debated since the war itself, clear answers have tended to drown in the clamor of conflicting interpretations. Now, the two brilliant, wholly different, and therefore marvelously complementary volumes by John Keegan and Niall Ferguson present the full record with a comprehensive clarity that will not soon be superseded. These two books will henceforth be the indispensable sources for anyone who wants to begin to understand what the great deviation was and why it occurred.

Keegan deals with the war itself, the strategy and tactics, the fighting, and the morale. Never before has the full panorama of combat in the Great War, from Flanders to Tsingtao and from Jutland to the Falkland Islands, been brought so vividly and passionately to life. This is certainly one of Keegan's best, worthy to stand beside his magnificent debut, *The Face of Battle*. Few works of history can match the dramatic tension of his account of the German invasion of France in the late summer of 1914. Keegan moves effortlessly from grand strategy to the skills and initiative of individual commanders, such as the German artillery commander Hans von Gronau, who realized on September 5 that the French were about to take the German offensive in the flank, counterattacked against superior numbers, and thus, probably, saved the German army.

Keegan ends his fascinating chronicle with a question. World War I, he says, remains a mystery, in its origins, its course, and above all in the courage and stamina of its combatants. That is where Ferguson picks up the thread. At the end of his account of economics, strategy, war finance, patriotism, and morale, the war remains a challenge and above all a tragedy, but it is, at least, no longer completely mysterious.

Ferguson, an economic historian whose grandfathers fought in the war, revises a number of received opinions—for example, the notion that Germany was starved into defeat by the British blockade, or that the peace of Versailles

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was vindictive and therefore to be blamed for German revanchism and the rise of Hitler. Germany in the 1920s was strategically and economically better off than in 1914, largely thanks to the collapse of Russia, which had not yet reemerged as the Communist superpower. It was the German hyperinflation of 1920–23, not the Versailles Treaty, that paved the way for Hitler, and, as Ferguson has argued convincingly in other works, hyperinflation was in no way a necessary consequence of the war.

■

Niall Ferguson suggests that a German victory in World War I, likely if Britain had stayed out, would not have been so bad.

■

Before 1914, liberal thinkers such as Norman Angell argued that war between industrial powers made no sense and that the only rational way to seek power was by trade and economic growth. Angell was right, but he underestimated the power of fear, nationalism, and the alliance commitments that drove Germany to support Austria-Hungary against Serbia and Russia to threaten Germany in response. "The banks could not stop a war," writes Ferguson, "but war could stop the banks." Economic interests trump political passions only when economics has itself become the political passion. That was not the case in 1914; whether it is the case now, time will tell.

Anyway, once the war got started the economic-interest calculus changed. As a journalist wrote in 1917, "Since nations counted money no more than pebbles on a beach, and all would probably repudiate in one form or another at the end of the war, there seemed no reason for stopping, especially as so many people were growing rich by the war; the ladies liked being without their husbands, and all dreaded the settlement afterwards." Ferguson endorses this judgment and its corollary, that the only way to end the war, once it started, was by defeating the main forces of the enemy. And that is what happened.

Victory came at a tremendous cost. One of Ferguson's more interesting innovations is to calculate the cost per death inflicted for the various belligerent states. He shows that the Central Powers killed more cheaply than the Entente. (The figures are $36,485 for every dead German or ally versus only $11,345 for the Central Powers to kill a soldier of the Entente.) Therefore, though the Central Powers were outnumbered, it took a long time to defeat them.

Ferguson's volume is a genuine mine of information, joining informative charts and tables to fluent analysis. But it is not problem-free. Ferguson is close to the John Charmley school of younger British historians who see the 20th century as a long and avoidable chronicle of British imperial decline. If only Britain had stayed out of the European wars of 1914 and 1939, this school argues, Britain would not have suffered a terminal loss of world power. A German victory in World War I, likely if Britain had stayed out, would not have been so bad: It would merely have produced, 80 years earlier, the German-dominated European Union of today. There would have been no Hitler, no second war, no Soviet power in Central Europe, a lot more prosperity and, yes, democracy, and a lot more people living their natural span.

This kind of counter-factual history, a speciality of Ferguson's, is often challenging and helpful; the Charmleyites may well be right that a more multipolar world, in which Britain still held a global position and American hegemony were balanced by others, might be preferable to what we have. But to equate the militant and proud imperial Germany of 1914, stretching from Strasbourg to Königsberg, to the flaccid and effete rump Germany of 1999 is to ignore what is decisive in history. It is not clear to this reader, at least, that German hegemony in 1914 would really have been as benign as the waning German economic hegemony of today. **NR**

Purchase or Perish

DAVID BROOKS

Luxury Fever: Why Money Fails to Satisfy in an Era of Excess, by Robert H. Frank (Free Press, 336 pp., $25)

LET'S say you're a professor of economics at Cornell and you get offered a job at Northwestern. You go out there to look around and it's pretty exciting: beautiful campus, smart kids, the attractions of Chicago just a few minutes away. Then you start thinking about your quality of life. In Ithaca, you were near the top of the economic pyramid. But in Chicago there are all those brokers and high-powered lawyers and corporate executives with incomes that tower over yours. In Ithaca, you could afford a handsome 1911 Arts and Crafts-style house, fully restored. But in Evanston that house would be way out of your range. Let's say a full professor at Northwestern makes a paltry $110,000 a year, but you'd need at least $170,000 a year to carry the mortgage on the charming house. Instead, you'd have to settle for a charmless split-level or a small colonial or something. You might even have to move into a neighborhood full of middle managers.

Such an experience is bound to make you contemplate social justice. Why, you might wonder, does the market reward people who lead inferior lives, who neglect their families so they can grind out more hours at work, who fill their days with anxiety-inducing corporate strife, who choose careers that don't allow them the intellectual freedom to contemplate the things that really matter? Maybe society can be restructured so that people would

Mr. Brooks, a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, is completing a book on upscale culture in America.

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have incentives to lead calmer, more satisfying lives, and people like you could afford charming houses.

As it transpires, Robert H. Frank has come up with a plan. Frank is a professor of economics who lives in a handsome 1911 Arts and Crafts-style home in Ithaca. He was offered a job at Northwestern and made that awful discovery about the Evanston real-estate market. And he's done some thinking about the way we Americans earn and spend our money.

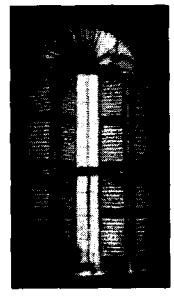
Robert Frank doesn't actually make a moral argument that the contemplative life is better. That would be too judgmental.

In *Luxury Fever*, he divides American consumption into two categories. There is conspicuous consumption, which is spending on the sorts of things shallow commodities traders buy: yachts, Rolex watches, $5,000 outdoor grills, premium cigars, $80,000 Jaguars, cosmetic surgery, and big houses with big yards. Then there is another form of consumption, which he calls non-conspicuous consumption, which means making work and spending choices in order to get the sort of things professors tend to prefer: free time, flexible hours, intellectual freedom, tight-knit communities with plenty of common areas, and large government agencies that offer an abundance of services. Frank thinks the second lifestyle—with lots of time to play with the kids and think deep thoughts—is better than the first. He proposes steep tax increases, to take money away from the rich so they don't have any incentive to work too hard or neglect the common good.

Now my first impulse is to tip my hat to Frank. In this age of cultural relativism and rampant pluralism, here finally is one person who says that one way of life is superior to another. But as I read further into *Luxury Fever*, I observe that Frank doesn't actually make a moral or philosophic argument that the contemplative life is better than the getting-and-spending life. That would be too judgmental. It would be out of step with the times.

Instead, Robert Frank turns to everybody's favorite ally these days, neuroscience. It seems that every non-fiction book I read lately has a few chapters that show that the structure of the human brain proves that the author's point of view is vindicated by science. I've read books that claim that the latest developments in neuroscience prove that the traditional male-dominated family is best, or that the communal family is best, or that man is naturally violent, or that man is naturally communal, or that man is communal so he can be violent against other communities. I confess I am not an expert on neuroscience, so I can't tell which interpretation of the literature is right. I only observe that neuroscience seems to offer a pretty gummy body of research, since it can be twisted in so many directions. And maybe that's one of the reasons it has become so fashionable. Philosophy and religion are in the doghouse, but brain chemistry dominates the age.

In any case, Frank uses neuroscience to prove that we would all be happier if we were liberals. "On the best available scientific evidence," he writes in that pseudo-objective tone I just love, "we seem not to be spending our money in ways that would most promote our own interests. We should be buying smaller houses and less expensive cars, the evidence seems to say, and spending more on a variety of less conspicuous forms of consumption." Also, our prefrontal lobes would have more serotonin in them (or something like that, I'm a little fuzzy on the chemistry) if we had bigger government and more social programs, especially environmental and safety regulations, urban-parkland programs, and a more generous social-safety net. (He detours into arguments for things like the minimum wage, but I'm not sure that is connected with brain chemistry.) And there would be other benefits. If the rich had less money, they wouldn't bid up the prices of things like Arts and Crafts homes in places like Evanston, Illinois. People earning, say, $110,000 would be able to afford them.



The reason we have gotten into this mess is that we are caught up in a competitive spiral (or at least most of us have, not Frank). We want to show we are as good as or better than our neighbors (there's something in our brains). So if they buy a $1,500 grill, suddenly that becomes our jumping-off point when we go shopping, and we start comparing $2,000 grills. (Again, all of us but Frank. He says he looked at the expensive grills and somehow was able to rise above the base desires that grip the rest of us. He didn't purchase one.) In any case, soon we have to work harder and harder to spend more and more for the sake of competitive display. But we don't wind up feeling any happier since our neighbors are spiraling up their work and spending just as quickly, so relatively none of us is better off. Frank's goal is not to dissuade people from showing off (he's a flinty-eyed realist), but rather to simply lower the standard at which they compete. He argues that we'd all be happier if collectively we were forced to live our lives on a smaller scale.

At this point the reader may wonder why he is wasting his time reading a book by an economist. If brain chemistry is so important, why bother to try to change brain chemistry by manipulating our lifestyles? Why don't we go straight to the heart of the problem and inject a little serotonin (or whatever) straight into our skulls? Then it wouldn't matter if we could afford that fully restored home. With enough chemistry, we'd be happy in a split-level.

But the second, larger problem that runs through this book is that Robert Frank doesn't seem to have observed the world around him very closely. Maybe in Las Vegas or in the upper reaches of Dallas there are some people who compete to see who can have the most expensive grill. But through most of upscale America—whether it is in Seattle, San Francisco, or Boston—people think the way Frank does. They reject vulgar displays of consumerism.

They channel their spending toward natural, organic, and wholesome goods, the accouterments of the simple life. The model is conspicuous cultivation, not conspicuous consumption. It's not a race of incomes, it's a race of sensibilities. And very often the way you go up in status is to go down in display. Frank has

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a simplistic model of how people compete for status. You buy glitz, I buy glitzier. But the texture of spending in upscale America is far more complicated. In fact, one of our problems is that Frank's elevated sensibility has become too popular. Now hip corporate moguls aren't as keen to buy those massive Norman castle-style mansions you see on Chicago's North Shore. They want the sophisticated Arts and Crafts-style homes that in earlier decades would have been of interest mainly to academics or bohemians. **NR**

Feel His Pain

TERRY TEACHOUT

Hannibal, by Thomas Harris
(Delacorte, 486 pp., $27.95)

"THE terrible thing about this world," laments a character in Jean Renoir's *Rules of the Game*, "is that everybody has his reason." In fact, the really terrible thing is that everybody wants to tell you his reason, preferably on network TV. And while most of us know perfectly well that most of those reasons are merely excuses, the cultural elite begs to differ: In postmodern America, all hats are gray and the sole deadly sin is the making of value judgments about anybody who isn't a member of the National Rifle Association. This, I suspect, is why novels about serial killers have become so popular of late. You always know who the bad guy is—he's the one standing over the fresh corpse, clutching a bloody knife—and no matter what his reason is, it's not good enough.

Thomas Harris, creator of Hannibal (The Cannibal) Lecter, the eleven-fingered psychiatrist who dines on his clients, used to be particularly skillful at distinguishing between reasons and excuses. Dr. Lecter, formerly a permanent resident of the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, goes out of his way in *The Silence of the Lambs* to inform FBI trainee Clarice Starling, his beautiful blonde nemesis, that he is not crazy but evil:

> Nothing happened to me, Officer Starling. *I* happened. You can't reduce me to a set of influences. You've given up good and evil for behaviorism, Officer Starling. . . . nothing is ever anybody's fault. Look at me, Officer Starling. Can you stand to say I'm evil?

Therein lies the source of the bad doctor's dark glamour: He never makes excuses for himself. This gives him a scary integrity that causes us to root for him when, at the end of *The Silence of the Lambs*, he crashes out of captivity and heads for South America, plastic surgery, and this bestselling sequel. Convention forbids me to reveal what you probably have already heard a dozen times over about the climax of *Hannibal*, so suffice it to say that after 468 pages' worth of increasingly unlikely sparring, Dr. Lecter and his lovely pursuer sit down to a delicious dinner for two and finally get to know each other—intimately.

Hannibal, alas, is not nearly so diverting as its predecessors, *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Red Dragon*, and not as good a book. Part of the problem is that Harris fancies himself a serious novelist but is actually something very different, a popular novelist with serious intentions. Anyone who doubts his weighty purpose need only consult the Dostoevskian epigraph to *The Silence of the Lambs*, a verse from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?" He makes much the same point in *Hannibal*, only this time in his own heavy-handed words:

> How do you behave when you know the conventional honors are dross? When you have come to believe with Marcus Aurelius that the opinion of future generations will be worth no more than the opinion of the current one? Is it possible to behave well then? Desirable to behave well then?

These are, to put it mildly, awfully good questions, but to ask them in a thriller about a psychotic aesthete of immeasurably high intelligence who loves Château d'Yquem, human flesh, and Glenn Gould's recording of the "Goldberg" Variations (the 1955 version, no doubt) is to ask for trouble, which is just what Harris gets. Like Scott Turow in *The Laws of Our Fathers*, he has let his ends outstrip his means this time around, and the results, not surprisingly, are embarrassingly pretentious.

No less embarrassing, though far more surprising, is Harris's inexplicable decision to do something for which Dr. Lecter would happily have sautéed his sweetbreads: He dares to explain his antihero's obsession with cannibalism. It seems (brace yourself) that as a 6-year-old child in Lithuania circa 1944, young Hannibal was forced to watch as his younger sister was carried away and

With *Hannibal*, Thomas Harris has let his ends outstrip his means, and the results are embarrassingly pretentious.

eaten by starving German soldiers. What possessed Harris to tell us such a thing? With this wholly unexpected revelation, the dignified demon whose credo is *Evil, be thou my good* shrivels before our eyes into yet another sympathy-seeking victim, the sort of fellow whose pain Bill Clinton would hasten to feel.

But, then, Dr. Lecter isn't the only one who holds a grudge. Thomas Harris was born in Mississippi, and early on in *Hannibal* he lets fly with a double-barreled blast at that old-time religion that leads you to suspect he must have spent more than his share of Sundays having it crammed down his throat. "God's choices in inflicting suffering," he writes, "are not satisfactory to us, nor are they understandable, unless innocence offends Him. Clearly He needs some help in directing the blind fury with which He flogs the earth." That sums up the main difference between *Hannibal* and its predecessors: The old Hannibal Lecter may have had his reasons for hating God, but at least he didn't whine about them. **NR**

Mr. Teachout, the music critic of *Commentary* and a contributor to *Time* magazine, is writing *H. L. Mencken: A Life*.

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Faces in the Mirror

DICK MORRIS

Truth to Tell: Tell It Early, Tell It All, Tell It Yourself: Notes from My White House Education, by Lanny J. Davis (Free Press, 284 pp., $25)

IN the Clinton administration, press spokesmen occupy a spot in the pecking order just below janitor. They are considered an alien presence, unwelcome in the inner councils of the White House. To hold such a job is to be pilloried by the media on the outside and cut off from all information on the inside. Apart from a paycheck, and a goodly amount of camera time, the post offers few enticements.

Lanny Davis—who worked in the White House counsel's office, primarily as a press flack, from December 1996 to January 1998—presents a curiously Janus-faced image. One face, he shows in his new memoir, *Truth to Tell*, which provides a relatively truthful, insightful, and complete account of how the administration fought to keep the facts about its various scandals from the public. But Davis's other face, he shows on television, even when he is promoting his book. There he offers the same cover-ups he rightly deplores in print. It's as if, having written his memoir, Davis has not read it.

So how are we to reconcile the two Lannys—Book Lanny and TV Lanny?

Book Lanny points out how the White House scrambled to avoid releasing the names of the donors who were caffeinated at White House coffees. He writes that he repeatedly argued for release of this information but found himself blocked at every turn. "I started to realize that the resistance I was encountering in getting answers to the reporters' questions was not simply the normal political resistance to cooperating with the press. I began to think that at least some of the DNC legal and finance people were lying to me." No!

Book Lanny is also refreshingly frank about the all-too-obvious purpose of these little White House gatherings: "Those coffees were held to raise money during a political campaign," and "that's a fact." Unlike his former colleagues, Book Lanny avoids White House-speak, admitting that the administration could not acknowledge that these coffees were fundraisers because such an admission might implicate the president in illegal activity. Once these coffees became widely known, the administration—Davis included—tried to spin them as "efforts to build financial support," not fundraisers.

According to Book Lanny, when he tried to get the White House to reveal the names of those who had stayed overnight in the Lincoln Bedroom, he faced a wall of opposition. "The lawyers resisted," he writes. "The answers were not forthcoming from within the White House or the DNC." When he attempted to release information about the administration's extensive contacts with tycoon and big donor Roger Tamraz (who by then was wanted for arrest by Interpol), "the wall of silence seemed to be in place again."

How odd, then, after all this honesty, that Davis should go on television to engage in exactly the sort of cover-up he exposes in his memoir, as he did on May 24, on Fox's *O'Reilly Factor*. There TV Lanny said, blandly, that the White House "help[ed] reporters write bad stories [about Clinton]," claiming that "we gave them the list of White House coffee names that led to so many embarrassing and damaging stories. We gave them the list of people who stayed overnight in the Lincoln Bedroom. We helped get the Tamraz story out, which involved compromising the CIA and the White House involving a campaign contributor. President Clinton hired me to do that."

So which Lanny Davis are we to believe? Should we read Book Lanny, who confesses that getting at the truth behind the Clinton scandals was like pulling teeth? Or watch TV Lanny, who assures us of the spontaneity and openness of the Clinton White House?

The likely answer lies in Econ 101: Davis's publisher knew that its chances of selling books would drop each time its author aided the Clintons in burying the truth. It probably pressed him to reveal what really went on. Now, though, as Davis contemplates his future career and its likely intersection with the Clintonistas at the White House, he pulls his punches when the all-important camera is on.

Actually, Davis isn't entirely forthcoming even in *Truth to Tell*. He writes almost entirely in the passive voice. He tells us that information is concealed; that questions go unanswered; that

How are we to reconcile the two Lannys—Book Lanny and TV Lanny?

decisions are made not to release facts. Few names—or even pronouns—appear in the story. Who did the concealing? Who decided not to answer? Who wouldn't release facts? Our so-discreet author doesn't say.

When he *does* identify those behind the stonewalling, we are told about agents, not principals. White House lawyers, the Democratic National Committee, or "the administration" make these decisions. Okay, but who pulled their strings? Who told them what to do? The answers remain shrouded. Even Book Lanny won't tell us.

It is as though Bill and Hillary Clinton didn't exist. Orders somehow descend from on high, and a curtain is pulled over the truth, blocking full or even partial disclosure. Davis offers no clue as to who pulled the curtain shut. His lowly station as the man charged with explaining the Clinton scandals to the press and public, of course, virtually precluded any access to the chief executive. He seems rarely to have spoken to either Clinton. And his book raises more questions than it answers.

So we are left with the big question, What role *did* Bill Clinton play in his administration's many cover-ups? We don't know, precisely. Does either Lanny? **NR**

Mr. Morris, author most recently of *The New Prince: Machiavelli Updated for the 21st Century*, was for more than 20 years an advisor to Bill Clinton.

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■ PUBLISHING ■

Female Trouble

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

THE other day, in an e-mail to a friend, I mentioned that I was reading a bunch of new novels about unmarried women looking for love in the big city. The books were charming, funny, but sad. It was a simple observation, to which my friend—a normally sweethearted and pacific girl, who happens to be unmarried—replied in an electronic fury: "Of course they are sad! But the REASON they are sad does not lie in the women themselves, but in the men who ruin their lives. I doubt that you, as a man, will be able to truly understand where these girls are coming from!"

Insert throat-clearing noise here. So how about those Knicks?

What got me reading the books was a panel discussion I attended at the 92nd Street Y, on the unlikely topic "What Do Single Girls Want?" The famous Young Men's Hebrew Association at 92nd and Lexington is one of New York's most relentlessly Serious institutions. On entering, you generally have to show the usher your eyebrows to make sure they're furrowed. So when the moderator, novelist Meg Wolitzer, got up to the podium and deadpanned, "I'm Cynthia Ozick and tonight we will be discussing 'The Burden of History,'" she got a knowing chuckle from the crowd.

On the panel were Helen Fielding and Melissa Bank, respectively the authors of *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *The Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing*, last year's and this year's biggest entries in a suddenly huge new publishing genre addressing the fears and hopes of urban, unmarried thirtysomething women. This spring and summer, no fewer than six such novels will have come out, replacing the whiny memoirs of abuse that till recently were the book industry's favorite flavor.

These women refuse to whine, though they would be justified in doing so. Americans are getting married later than ever before: Over the past 20 years, the number of unmarried women over 30 has almost doubled. This works out nicely for men. But beyond a certain age, women discover that it's increasingly difficult to find a spouse. Miss Fielding's Bridget Jones, an adorable thirtysomething flunky at a London publishing house, puts it memorably: "As women glide from their twenties to thirties, . . . the balance of power subtly shifts. Even the most outrageous minxes lose their nerve, wrestling with the first twinges of existential angst: fear of dying alone and being found three weeks later half-eaten by an Alsatian." The protagonist of a new single-girl novel, Amy Sohn's *Run Catch Kiss*, worries about being left adrift at 45 when "my chances of getting married would be smaller than my chances of getting killed in a terrorist attack."

Nor are the unmarried thirtysomethings the only ones who are afraid. One theme of these novels has to do with Smug Marrieds (as Bridget Jones calls them), constantly pestering single female friends about their "social life." This is evidently a universal experience. At the Y, I sat down next to a couple of attractive 34-year-olds, one single, the other (whew!) recently married. Said the latter, a journalist: "Before I got married, I could call up my father on the phone and say, 'Daddy! I just won a Pulitzer and made a killing on Internet stocks!'

■

Who ever heard of an amusing feminist? But Helen Fielding and Melissa Banks were practically a stand-up act.

■

There'd be this pause, then he'd say, 'So what's going on socially?'" The journalist's friend, a college professor, told about how her mother leaves Post-it notes on the refrigerator with the names of men to whom she's given her daughter's phone number, followed by: "They'll probably never call, but what the heck!"

These poor girls. In her spunky novel,

Mr. Klinghoffer, an NR senior editor, is author of *The Lord Will Gather Me In: My Journey to Jewish Orthodoxy.*

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Miss Sohn semiautobiographically recalls being brainwashed as a college student, at Brown, spending "four years learning not to buy into the warped value system of the patriarchal hegemony." Getting married before it's too late is one such value. After college, as Miss Bank's narrator says, "there was our sea-horse period, when we were told that we didn't need mates; we were supposed to make ourselves happy just bobbing around in careers." In her darkly funny new novel, *A Certain Age*, Tama Janowitz puts heretical ideas in the mind of her desperate 32-year-old heroine, romantic ideas about marriage, even about hoping to get hitched to a man of means: "Women—modern women—were not supposed to think this way; they were supposed to be tough, interested in their careers, cultural events. . . . Romance was girlie stuff; getting money and acceptance through marriage was contemptible."

Clearly these women have been cheated, lied to about what matters in life, and they themselves will pay for the deception. Yet both at the Y and in these books, what you heard was not complaints but jokes. *Bridget Jones* and *Girls' Guide* are the kind of books you read with a smile on your face from the first page to the last. Miss Bank also happens to be a fine writer. If not quite a book for the ages, *Girls' Guide* is a perfectly drawn portrait of Jane Rosenal, its endearing protagonist, a peon book editor who falls in love with a much older editor at a competing publisher. When inevitably this relationship collapses, Jane must find a suitable man closer to her own age—a formidable challenge.

But what stands out most about these books and their authors is their fondness for wisecracks. When Jane loses her job, her ancient boyfriend insists on getting her a position at his company. Lying in bed with him, she says, "I could bring you up on charges for that."

"What?"

"Work harassment in the sexual place."

This jokiness was especially striking in the context of the 92nd Street Y's solemn, dark-paneled auditorium. Earlier writers on "women's issues" were inclined to lecture at you. Who ever heard of an amusing feminist? But Miss Fielding and Miss Bank were practically a stand-up act. The former spoke of *Bridget* being published in Italy, where the title in translation sounded like *The Diarrhea of Bridget Jones*, and a pompous journalist asked whether she intended the book as "a transcendental meditation on existential despair."

"I said"—nodding her head eagerly—"'Yeah!'"

But a melancholy thought creeps in among the wisecracks. In *Bridget Jones*, Miss Fielding cites a "theory that homosexuals and single women in their 30s have natural bonding: both being accustomed to disappointing their parents and being treated as freaks by society." In an essay on gays and their affinity for campy humor, Susan Sontag once wrote that this affinity can be explained as a defense against the sadness of a homosexual's life. In the hope of lightening the burden of guilt, gays make jokes.

Of course, considered as an individual, an unmarried woman over 30 has nothing to feel guilty about. But collectively there's something sad indeed about the condition of the uncountable single women over that age who, as twentysomethings, were fooled into disdaining early marriage. And who as a result may go through life alone. Just now those women are writing and reading amusing novels about themselves, to brush away the tears. Even a man can understand that. **NR**

■ CITY DESK ■

Can We Talk?

RICHARD BROOKHISER

WALT WHITMAN, New York poet, said he could hear America singing. Did he hear New Yorkers squawking? New Yorkers have long been known for speaking loud and fast. But they also have typical intonations—patterns of syllables that distinguish them even when the words get lost in static.

The varied New York accents of the old white ethnic groups are vanishing. As they recede, the differences among Irish, Italians, and Jews lose their importance, and the common sing-song of all of them emerges. *Squack-squawk-squack-squawk-squaw-squa-squawk.* Sweeter than jackhammers, more raucous than migrating geese, it is the sound that issues from cabbies, cops, and mobsters in old movies, and from the larynx of Ed Koch today.

Other songs are replacing this one on the city streets. One of the newcomers is the murmur of what the *Times* is pleased to call "youths" (i.e., bands of black kids). The predominant vowels are *uh* and *o*. Placing a *y* before the latter creates the all-purpose salutation and interjection, *Yo!* Thus: *Yo, muh-fo, yuh-fuh-muh, yo.* Because this pattern is more common, it is easier to pick out actual words from it. Obscenities are frequent. So is, *Nome sane?* (*You know what I'm saying?*). So is *nigger* (or *nigga*, as rappers or their amanuenses spell it).

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The current rage, as common as pollen, as deadly as plague, is the speech pattern of young white women: the *ya-ya* voice.

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This usage, which startles the well-trained white when he first hears it, is not quite a racial epithet when uttered by a youth, but a synonym for *people* (*Never seen so many niggaz b'fore*, I once heard a kid say sarcastically on the edge of a large crowd of black people). It can also be a pronoun, in the second person (*Yo, nigga*) or the third (*Nigga to' me*, meaning *He told me*). These neutral usages apply only when used by blacks among blacks. A person of no color who tried to join in the fun would be most unwise.

Then there is the current rage, common as pollen, deadly as plague, the speech pattern of young white women: the *ya-ya* voice. In cafes, shoe stores, bars, wherever two twenty-five-somethings gather together, or where even one has cornered a boyfriend, you hear the high, piercing patter: *ya-ya-ya-ya-*

Mr. Brookhiser, an NR senior editor, is author most recently of *Alexander Hamilton, American.*

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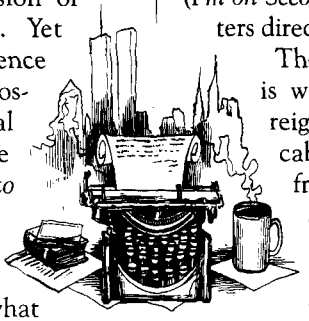
ya-ya-ya. If dogfish or other small sharks could speak, they would speak like this. Little girls have this pattern, because they have undeveloped vocal chords, but these are big girls. Is this pitch and tempo a way of self-infantilizing? When you add the rising inflection that ends all sentences, not just questions—*ya-ya-ya-ya-ya?*—the impression of timidity is strengthened. Yet there is a propulsive insistence to it. When you come in closer the language is normal English, except for the replacement of the verb *to say* with *to be + like* (*So I was like, I don't like this at all?*). I remember being 20, and I think I remember what women of that age sounded like, but I don't remember this. In all of the city, I know one young woman of that age with a sexy growl, but beside the fact that I am married, she is a lesbian. A twofer.



I sympathize with the *ya-ya* women of New York. Their lives are hard. They have to wear killer heels, or ugly sneakers. Their working uniform is the suit jacket and short skirt, black of course, suggesting some assembled creature of mythology, the centaur or the mermaid. They must simultaneously display competence and high earning power, plus nice legs. Pressure does weird things to the throat, any public speaker can tell you. I only wish it didn't do this weird thing.

All New York voices, including the *ya-ya* voice, have been augmented by the yell phone, a/k/a the cell phone. I have been watching the approach of this deadly instrument for years. The first portable phone I saw was in Hong Kong in the mid '80s. It looked like a desk phone, which some Chinese businessman, unable to contain himself, had carried onto the street (*Hung-wa, hung-wa, hung-shiuh*). The next one I saw was being used by a Russian criminal in a St. Petersburg restaurant. He would interrupt his blonde companion to take calls (*Skdrozhky, drozhky, nyevits*). I thought of telling him that truly important people had people to take their calls, but I didn't want him to rearrange my face. My first American sighting was in the movie *Clueless*, where Alicia Silverstone's cell was a sign of her unimaginable wealth and frivolity. I don't remember whether she went *ya-ya*. But now that the price has dropped they are everywhere. Honest New Yorkers, not just drug dealers, resort to them constantly. I have never overheard one conversation that seemed necessary or intelligent. Mostly the talk is positional (*I'm on Second Avenue*), like KLA spotters directing the incoming missiles.

The newest kingdom of the cell is where you least want it to reign—in the hands of Indian cabbies. The syllable pattern from the driver's seat is a sharp *Habdela-habdela-habdela*, as fast as the cab itself. You have three options, as you hurtle through the Park Avenue tunnel. *Could you put that down?* If that doesn't work, *Can I please not die now?* Finally, when you emerge, *Stop the cab!* What he hears, of course, is *Wog da wag!* **NR**

■ MUSIC ■

Corigliano Scores

JAY NORDLINGER

THE RED VIOLIN, now in the theaters, is a deeply problematic movie, rightly panned by the critics. But in this case, the play's not the thing—the music is. The score is by John Corigliano, one of the most interesting and successful composers in the world today. The chief performer of that score is Joshua Bell, one of the world's most interesting and successful violinists. At the multiplex recently, a woman, on the movie's conclusion, announced loudly, "I've got to get that soundtrack." As well she should.

The movie is built on a marvelous idea: the course of a violin, made in Cremona at the end of the 17th century, over three more centuries, as it is passed from hand to hand, over land and sea. But the director, François Girard, stumbles along the way. Acclaimed for his *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn*

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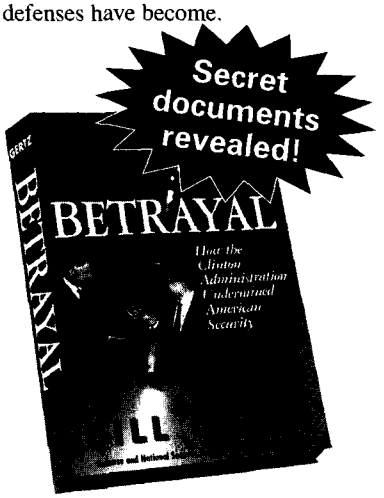

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Gould, he has now made a movie both ponderous and preposterous, if engaging in spots. He had the good fortune, however, to hire Corigliano, for the music bears up the movie. Indeed, it sometimes seems that the movie is meant to accompany the score, rather than the other way around. A viewing of *The Red Violin* is primarily a musical experience.

John Corigliano is not afraid to write music that people enjoy. A bizarre statement, that! But a significant one in the context of modern musical life. He strives to please not only himself and his peers but . . . his audiences, which is positively revolutionary at a time when beauty, popularity, and riches can get you branded as a sellout, hack, or worse.

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John Corigliano is not afraid to write music that people enjoy. A bizarre statement, that! But significant.

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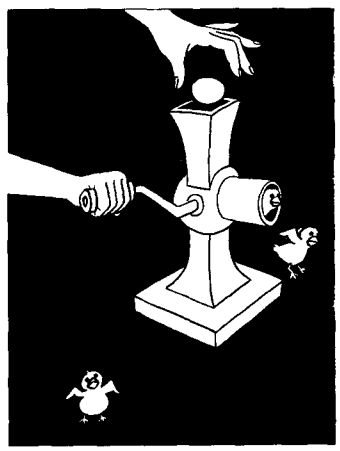
Corigliano, an American just past 60, has long been known for his versatility and eclecticism—an eclecticism that can prove maddening, as he bounces from style to style without ever seeming to find a compositional home. His opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* has been labeled a "masterpastiche." His Symphony No. 1—the "AIDS Symphony," an intelligent and affecting work, despite the politics surrounding it—is likewise a jumble. Yet this is, in fact, the Corigliano style: to have none; and all.

Which, of course, makes him particularly well suited to the movies. The organist who accompanied the silents had to play whatever the action on the screen suggested was appropriate. The proper film composer is charged with doing much the same thing. Corigliano first turned to Hollywood in the early 1980s, when he provided the scores for *Altered States* and *Revolution*. Most established contemporary composers have, from time to time, dabbled in the movies—for cash, exposure, and even a little artistic adventure. John Williams, naturally, is the king of movie composing today. Though he is scorned by a certain type of musical pretender, real musicians know his worth: What he does is infinitely harder than it seems. Leonard Bernstein once claimed that he would have given five years of his life to have written Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever*. In the same humility, composers might now admit that they would sacrifice at least a month or two to have written the theme from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Corigliano has always shown an aptitude for violin writing. (He is John Jr. His father, John Sr., was concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic.) His first major composition was a violin sonata, which will probably last as long as his *Ghosts* and symphony—which is to say, plenty long. For *The Red Violin*, he has written an assortment of music, ranging from the Baroque, on through the Classical and Romantic, and into his own time. Here is the old eclectician at work, a musical chameleon darting with relish among the epochs.

His starting-point is a simple tune, first hummed, then assumed by the violin. It is a typical Corigliano air: melancholy, wistful, just a touch atonal, otherwise frankly romantic. It later takes on a hint of Semitic sadness, the suggestion of a wail, so central to the violin sound. The movie's instrument makes its way through Vivaldi-like concerti grossi, Paganini-like etudes, with their bewildering virtuosity, and Brahmsian romances, lush and sensual. There are Gypsies too—what would a violin movie be without Gypsies?—along with a dose of the klezmer. The score is filled with fire and blood, but there are gentle and austere sections as well. Corigliano is a refreshingly spare composer, employing no more notes or instruments than necessary. Never does his music seem overstuffed; he lends to even his larger orchestrations a chamber-like quality.



Out of his movie score, Corigliano has also fashioned a concert piece, a chaconne for violin and orchestra, not heard in the movie but included on the soundtrack recording. This is the composer's bid to add something of consequence to the violin-and-orchestra repertory; it is also a bow to the mother of all chaconnes, the Bach D minor, from the second partita. The Corigliano, however, is not a strong work. It is an odd sort of chaconne, more like a rhapsody—breathless, soaring, a little bombastic. It is a diffuse and histrionic work, with little evident internal logic. It contains individual passages of loveliness and skill, but in no way hangs together.

Nevertheless, Corigliano has, in his film score at large, another triumph. Like the finest such scores—Korngold's, Shostakovich's, Copland's—it can be savored all on its own, celluloid aside.

And not least of what Corigliano has done is give Joshua Bell a showcase. The world is going to have to accept sooner or later that this amiable Hoosier—now in his early 30s—is one of the most satisfying violinists presently before the public. He has never really been given his critical due, perhaps because of his white-bread American origins and appearance: He does not look like a violinist; he looks like a member of the Brat Pack, that group of cocky actors from the '80s. Bell grew up in Bloomington and studied with Josef Gingold, a beloved player and teacher who was the string world's gift to Indiana University. Bell is roughly the same age as the German Anne-Sophie Mutter and has tended to suffer by comparison with her, in the musical press. But this is an injustice: He is clearly her superior, and that of many others.

Bell's virtues are manifold: He boasts a wonderful, and wonderfully useful, tone, not too rich, not too thin, flexible but solid. His intonation is exemplary, his passage-work crisply articulated. He does not overpower with technical wizardry, but he can do whatever he wishes with the violin. Above all, he is musical: There is an honesty about his playing. He is seldom self-conscious, but rather purely expressive. He is a singer on his instrument, knowing how to breathe, sensing how to shape a phrase. Obviously, he has been superbly taught, but he has that most vital and unteachable attribute: musical intelligence. Like every other violinist, he reveres Heifetz and Kreisler, but he most resembles Zino Francescatti, the tasteful

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and aristocratic Frenchman with the songful Italian name.

The young man's discography is relatively modest, but growing: a recent album devoted to his countryman Gershwin, including the piano preludes transcribed by Heifetz; a French collection, featuring, among other familiar works, Ravel's *Tzigane*, whose poetry and exoticism he captures exquisitely; correct and authoritative Mozart concertos; a masterly Barber concerto, with the right blend of velvet and steel; and an utterly winsome album of Kreisler, that smooth purveyor of highest-quality froth.

Then there is, of course, the soundtrack of *The Red Violin*—a Corigliano grab bag, thrillingly played, that is a repertory unto itself. **NR**

■ FILM ■

Triple Whammy

JOHN SIMON

THE overrated Mike Figgis's ***The Loss of Sexual Innocence*** strikes me as the mating of pretension and ineptitude, both of them the writer-director's stock in trade. This opus, 15 years in gestation, equates the story of Figgis's coming of age with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden.

As if this weren't enough, Figgis rewrites the Bible. A hefty African Adam (Femi Ogumbanjo) and a scrawny Scandinavian blonde Eve (Hanne Klintoe) surface separately from a pond. He seems mostly cheerful, she a rather anemic Anadyomene. After chasing around the underbrush nude, they finally acquire one piece of clothing: a snake worn around the neck as a (get it?) boa. "The finale," Figgis explains, "called for them to emerge from the Garden of Eden in a violent rainstorm, naked, and then to be surrounded by paparazzi and street people." You'd think creatures born from the waves could handle a mere rainstorm, especially without having to worry about their clothes getting drenched.

The film is proudly, defiantly nonlinear. The story of Genesis is intercut with supposedly crucial incidents from the life of the filmmaker at ages 5, 12, 16, and, we read, "as a fully grown man," though there is scant evidence of Figgis's having attained that state. Various mundane episodes are told in fragmented fashion and no particular order in places without context, as when an unidentified person waits for an anonymous other in a meaningless airport.

The adult Nic (our hero) is portrayed by a stony-faced Julian Sands, seen driving with a couple of others, one of them presumably his wife, along a highway through the Sahara. Nothing happens until the car is stopped by a seemingly dead body before it, whereupon the emerging passengers are surrounded by a bunch of hostile Bedouins, threatening the loss of more than sexual

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The Loss of Sexual Innocence **equates Mike Figgis's coming of age with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden.**

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innocence. Because Figgis was born in Carlisle, England, then lived in Nairobi and Newcastle, these locations are thrown pell-mell into the film. Having played with various rock and R&B bands, Figgis fancies himself a composer as well, and supplies his own soundtrack, fully on a par with all else in the film.

His fame rests chiefly on his one hit, *Leaving Las Vegas*, which I found as trashy as the rest of his œuvre. The interest of his failed last feature, *One Night Stand*, lay chiefly in its interracial romance, though at least Wesley Snipes and Nastassja Kinski did not portray Adam and Eve. The name of Figgis's current production company is Red Mullet Films; I wonder how a herring managed to become a mullet.

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■ A better film from a better director—though still, alas, unsatisfactory—is ***Limbo***, by John Sayles. The author-director, who is also a novelist, offers something that craves to be a good-sized novel and emerges jumpy on film, with some key characters rather too sketchy, although the striking Alaskan surroundings, authoritatively shot by the veteran cinematographer Haskell Wexler, offer a good deal in compensation.

Best about the movie is its casting of Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and David Strathairn in the leads; next-best are the sequences of them, and the heroine's younger sister (the not especially winning Vanessa Martinez), struggling to survive as castaways in the wilderness. But there is also an undernourished crime story and a story of long-dead characters read from a found diary, less appealing than the fishing and cannery episodes, displaying Sayles as an accomplished quasi-documentarian.

Irritatingly, Miss Martinez's readings from that diary lead up to a trick climax that diminishes their value, and the entire film concludes with some shaggy-dog gimmickry unworthy of its finer aspects. Even so, the faults of *Limbo* are those of a good mind trying to be too clever, rather than, as customary in Hollywood, of poor minds wallowing in their incompetence. And, with some good writing, acting, and photography, the body of the film, at any rate, passes muster.

■ Shaw considered ***An Ideal Husband*** Wilde's best play, only because, I suspect, he knew that its clear superior, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, was competition too close for comfort. But even Wilde's splendid second-best should be spared the ignominy that Oliver Parker's adaptation and direction heap upon it. Wilde used the typically Victorian melodramatic plot as a mere excuse for his irresistibly challenging epigrams. Parker, inexcusably, emphasizes the creaky plot, cuts out much of the wit, and introduces his own failed cleverness instead. The cuckoo hatched from this egg is stillborn.

Early on in the play, for example, the unscrupulous Mrs. Cheveley says this about politicians: "In modern life nothing produces such an effect as a good platitude. It makes the whole world kin." That, with its allusion to Shakespeare's famous line, is nothing short of profound; like so much of value, it is excised from the film. I shan't bother you with samples of Parker's sorry surrogate wit, but to convey how low the director will stoop, let me mention that he introduces a would-be steamy bedroom scene that, on top of its total inappropriateness, is played with unparalleled lack of brio.

Aside from wit, what distinguishes Wilde's plays is their intense theatricality, the precise virtue most unsuited to film. This hasn't stopped moviemakers from trying. Thus the great Ernst Lubitsch made a silent-movie version of *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1925), though Wilde without words is like a chocolate soda without chocolate. In 1949, Otto Preminger weighed in with *The Fan*, about which it suffices to say that two of the leads were played by Jeanne Crain and Richard Greene.

Here at least we have a British cast, with the exception of Julianne Moore, playing the Machiavellian Mrs. Cheveley—who tries to blackmail the brilliant, rising politician-hero by exposing the youthful sin that started his success—with a one-note, smarmy sugariness far less tolerable than her character's deficient ethics. Jeremy Northam may well be the current English leading man of choice, but as Sir Robert Chiltern, threatened with the loss of both his career and his beloved but unbending wife, he exhibits more plodding determination than imperiled dash. As Lady Chiltern, on whose marmoreal morals and stipulated "grave Greek beauty" so much depends, the not untalented but amiably ordinary Cate Blanchett is no goddess confronted with the odor of humanity. And as the typically saucy Wildean ingenue, Mabel, the insufferably smug and woodchuck-cheeked Minnie Driver proffers what the French call a *tête à gifler*—a face begging to be slapped.

Relatively (I stress the adverb) more successful are Rupert Everett as Lord Goring, the effete wastrel with the heart of gold, and John Wood, as his disgruntled and blustering father, the Earl of Caversham. The former lacks a bit of extra charm, the latter some added weight. But what can you expect from a film that allows Peter Vaughan, a specialist in butlers, to overact shamelessly, and squanders the delightful Lindsay Duncan on the tiny part of Lady Markby, further diminished by Parker's cuts? Even David Johnson's cinematography is humdrum, and the routine but relentless music by the aptly named Charlie Mole seems to reach us annoyingly from a burrow.

My favorite bit is when the principals attend the premiere of the then not-yet-produced *Importance of Being Earnest*, a literary device known as prolepsis, here as apt as when Mabel at one point refers to Mrs. Cheveley as Mrs. Cheeseley. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Godforsaken Books

NEW YORK, JUNE 1

BOOKS are on my mind because 1) today the *Wall Street Journal*'s inside lead tells us, "Borders to Try/A New Weapon: Printing Books/Inside Its Stores"; 2) today is the publication date for my 40th book (title withheld, for the sake of propriety); and 3) yesterday I completed reading the galleys of a striking exploration of the book scene called *The Making of a Bestseller—From Author to Reader*, by Arthur T. Vanderbilt II.

Fifteen years ago the retired drama critic Stuart W. Little and I launched an enterprise. Situation: About 45,000 books are published every year. Eighty percent of them are remaindered (that means, disposed of: sold to secondhand houses or to anybody else; or destroyed) before the end of Year One, making "shelf space" for newer books that come along. Result? If you want a year-old book, you might not be able to find it. Bad for the reader and awful, truly awful, for the writer. The idea was to encourage publishers to return to the authors 100 or so unsold books before remainder time, allowing them to advertise their existence in a special catalogue, the Buckley-Little Catalogue.

The enterprise failed for lack of circulation of the catalogue in bookstores, but never mind: Two businessmen materialized who bought the business for a very modest sum and a few months later went bankrupt and hid from an adamant collector whatever assets they had. Among their enterprises was to be a device that foreshadowed the *WSJ*'s story: "Borders Group, Inc., in a deal to be announced today, has taken a minority stake in an Atlanta start-up company called Sprout, Inc., that will eventually let the chain's stores print high-quality paperbacks in the store in about 15 minutes. 'Making a book will be no more difficult than making a latte at Starbucks,' brags Sprout's 30-year-old co-founder, Henry Topping." Cost to the consumer? About the same as the original edition. If it works, that is a high moment in the moribund life of Buckley-Little.

But consider the ambient scene. "The initial hurdle to selling books," Mr. Vanderbilt tells us "—and it's a Matterhorn of a hurdle—is that nobody reads. Selling books in the United States is like selling videotapes in a country where 75 percent of the population doesn't own a VCR, and the 25 percent of the population that does, hasn't a clue how to operate them."

The author rubs the gritty data in our faces. We are a nation of 250 million (as of 1990). The sale of a mere 50,000 copies can put a book on the bestseller list. Sell more than 1 million and you have a runaway bestseller, even though that means 0.5 percent of the reading public has bought it. The highest sellers in recent years are 1.3 million, Tom Clancy; 1.2, Stephen King; 1.1, Danielle Steel; 850,000, James Michener; 475,000, Jackie Collins; 450,000, John le Carré; and 330,000, Ken Follett.

How does that compare with other reading publics? John Steinbeck, we learn, was astonished that the print run in Denmark for one of his books was identical to the print run in America. Denmark then had a population of 5 million.

The figures are most awfully discouraging. A 1993 survey released by the Department of Education tells us that 90 million Americans over the age of 16 lack the reading and writing skills required for employment. Seven hundred thousand students, the Department of Education grieves, graduate "without the ability to read their diploma."

Vanderbilt goes on to discuss aliteracy, a word that does not exist in the *American Heritage Dictionary* on which I rely, and which means, as one would reason, the ability to read without the desire to do so. "This affliction," Mr. V. observes, "even among high-school and college graduates, is rampant." Aliteracy is most evident, in everyday life, aboard airplanes. Walk down the aisle and observe passengers who deprive themselves of reading.

How to achieve bestsellerdom? The author hits us with a dismaying figure. It is that to expect a person to buy a new book, the author must contrive to cause the prospective purchaser to hear about it *six times* in one week, by whatever means: advertisement, radio/television interview, a neighbor or friend who has read the book and liked it, mention of it in society or gossip columns. That is a very tough assignment, much harder than writing a book.

Speaking of John Steinbeck, I recall the story that one day in the Thirties he turned on his publisher, the distinguished Harold Guinzburg of Viking Press, and said: "*I* write it, *you* sell it."

That's just great, but you need to be a J. D. Salinger to get away with it. He promoted his books by refusing to do so. The rest of us labor at Barnes & Noble.

So What Now For China?

NEW YORK, MAY 28

WHEN Rep. Chris Cox answered questions on the matter of Chinese espionage, he spoke matter-of-factly about what should be done if one or more Chinese-Americans were tried and convicted. "They should be executed."

Holy Moses! It has been a long time since we executed traitors. And the general feel of the modern situation is that the Rosenbergs were executed in the age when McCarthyism was rampant, and such a dark age is behind us besides . . .

The enterprise of the Cox committee was very thorough, with 700 pages published. The 300 or so pages suppressed contain we know not what. The only safe assumption is that they do not mitigate that much which we are permitted to read. Presumably they hide details which are considered unsafe to publicize, even though it is hard to imagine that there is anything in the hidden material that the Chinese government doesn't have.

So what we are left with is the knowledge that there is now parity in the storehouses of the science that goes into the making of our entire inventory of nuclear and missile weaponry. There will not be parity in forces-in-place for many years. It takes a while, even if you have all the instructions, to make 8,000 nuclear missiles.

But of course the nature of our relationship with Peking is changed. As one observer commented: If the Chinese announce that they are going to recapture their "province" of Taiwan, and the U.S. posed the usual deterrent by parading the

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Seventh Fleet up and down the Taiwan Strait, would our deterrent be convincing? The dilemma is phrased in terms we got used to during the Cold War, only this time it isn't, Would you exchange Paris and Chicago for Berlin?, but, Would we exchange Los Angeles for Taipei?

Henry Kissinger is correct in warning against the instinct to polarize. The impulse is natural to be bitter and resentful over any country's acquisition of critical weapons of war. And that impulse should be felt more keenly when those weapons are stolen.

What is missing in the current situation is anything like the sense of outrage we felt a generation ago. That is so for one reason that is obvious, another that isn't. The press of the Cold War against the Soviet Union was punctuated by very dangerous flash points, in Greece, Berlin, Czechoslovakia, and Cuba. For one period in the late Fifties, people were building underground shelters. Khrushchev was threatening to bury us.

There isn't anything of that spirit in the air today, not remotely. We seem to be mildly annoyed. There is fleeting mention of the possibility that Sandy Berger and even Janet Reno should be dismissed from office. But after the failure to impeach Mr. Clinton for more direct abuses of office, the likelihood that Congress can effect the removal of any member of the Clinton cabinet is remote. Such political energy as is potentially on the scene, seeking escape in retributive policy decisions, is most likely to generate pressures where they are least profitable, namely pressures against continued or heightened commercial activity with China. But to discourage trade is damaging commercially to the United States, and a misdirection of the goal we would most welcome, namely the civilizing of China in a peaceful regional federation.

The great obstacle here is of course Taiwan. The irredentist lust for Taiwan is a Chinese passion. The great strategic error of the governments of Taiwan and of our own has been to coddle the fiction that Taiwan is a genuine part of China, merely because that was so in previous centuries. The sentiment within Taiwan has veered toward independence. But the Cox developments will weaken that movement. If tomorrow the government of Taiwan were to pass over to the independence movement, we could expect that such a move would be treated as a casus belli by Peking.

But somewhere down the line, whatever the policies of the Taiwan government—short of capitulation—the crisis will come. It can only be met by absolutely straightforward pledges, of a kind that kept the Soviet Union at bay in Europe. The road to that point can best be prepared not merely by thunderous diplomatic declarations, but by giving to Taiwan such weapons as are still useful in self-defense, and by encouraging nuclear parity in Japan.

Is it true, as so widely alleged, that the defense of Taiwan depends on a NATO triumph in Kosovo? Surely not, since there isn't anybody on the other side in Kosovo bristling with nuclear weapons. Russia has been noisy, but not menacing.

But yes, Mr. Cox is right. Meanwhile we should try to hang the traitors.

Guns for Ma and Pa?

NEW YORK, MAY 25

THE whirlwind tossing the GOP about reasserts the need to define a position on guns that has inherent credibility. But right away one runs into the implications of the Second Amendment. If the Bill of Rights was saying that all Americans had the right to own weapons without any qualification, we need to ask—why? The National Rifle Association, acknowledged as the spokesman of what they call the gun lobby, reads that article in the Bill of Rights as guaranteeing the right to gun-ownership. Again, why?

NRA president Charlton Heston has named that right to be preeminent. To believe that, one has to accept a reductionism: Man's possessions, property, and freedom must be defended. If institutional defenses—an army, a National Guard, the local police—fail you, then you are left alone with only your rifle by your side.

To aim at whom?

If the aggressor is an army of occupation, a rifle is useful only as an instrument in a resistance movement. And that, probably, is what the authors of the Second Amendment had in mind, having only a dozen years earlier fought their way to freedom. They conceived of the man with his rifle as a member of a militia, a citizen soldier. A subsidiary point here is that the right "to keep and bear Arms" didn't have anything to do with hunting deer or pheasant. The right to bear arms had to do with the right to shoot people.

The threat of a foreign army taking over the United States is so remote as to be nugatory. Devotees of the right to bear arms have in mind self-protection as a contingent necessity. Not because our Army, Navy, and Air Force have let us down, but because there are people all around the country who kill and maim. An essay published some years ago in *The Public Interest* spoke of a couple in their eighties living in the Bronx who had been tormented by muggers and pillagers and found it possible to sleep only after acquiring a shotgun and posting a note on their door calling attention to it.

The major conceptual experiment of the day has to do with the question of handguns carried by individual citizens. The question before the house is: Does this practice in fact reduce crime—by intimidating potential criminals? In Texas the idea is being tested. There you can get a permit to carry a handgun if you have no criminal record or detectable criminal propensity. Are we to believe that a mugger in the streets of Dallas will stay his hand because of a probability that the lady with the fur coat and diamond watch is carrying a handgun? And is fast on the draw? Last year the University of Chicago Press published a book by professor John R. Lott Jr. of Chicago's law faculty with the provocative title, *More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws*. Its thesis is precisely as given in the book's title: The more guns there are around, the fewer crimes committed. Professor Lott specifically stressed the usefulness of guns for teachers and minorities, both insufficiently protected against criminal behavior. The postulate in Professor Lott's book is simple and dominant. In the summary of the book by Professor John O. McGinnis of Cardozo Law School at Yeshiva University, "Gun control does not decrease gun ownership by criminals but instead reduces their incentives to refrain from violence because it decreases the supply of armed law-abiding citizens who might resist them."

Well, the GOP is not about to endorse guns for everybody. The attritions the NRA objects to are in fact welcome, or should be. Checks against impulsive buys are a good idea, as also a record of guns sold and to whom. There is no need for assault weapons to protect against random individual aggressors. The proposition that you need to protect the right of citizens to own machine guns in case the modern Indians come charging in should be laid to rest as yesterday's reasonable demand, unreasonable in current circumstances.

But the orderly way for the GOP to proceed is by deferring to the rights of states to experiment with gun control in their own way. Some state policies can be opposed by appeal to the Second Amendment, and these necessarily go for adjudication to Washington. But the states should write their own laws governing traffic in arms, and the Republicans would be wise to acknowledge traditional apportionment of responsibilities.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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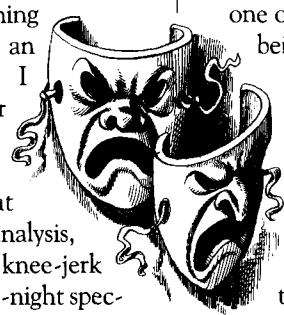
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

WHEN Geraldine Ferraro ran for vice president in 1984 I was bombarded with requests for articles on how women would react to her. Now Campaign 2000 is threatening to turn into a political bake-off, but so far nobody has asked me to write about Elizabeth Dole. It's just as well because I couldn't possibly do it.

In the first place, I don't have any notes on her. After her ding-a-ling performance at the 1996 GOP convention I dutifully started a file called E. Doli so as not to mix her up in her husband's (poorbob-dole.com), but the only thing in it is the envelope from an old gas bill on which I scrawled: "Betty Crocker before they made her look ethnic."



I need a subject that lends itself to detached analysis, but E. Doli gets me into knee-jerk reactions, déjà vu, and late-night speculation on whether there might be something to this karma business after all. The only way I can write about her is to practice Freudian free association.

E. Doli is the woman who keeps cropping up in my life as a vacuous nemesis. Note the only-in-America aspect here. A nemesis by definition has enormous psychic heft and menace; a silly, shallow nemesis is oxymoronic but that's the kind we produce, and they find me every time.

A classic vacuous nemesis of the Fifties was the young, progressive dean of women who was brought in to replace the septuagenarian, traditional dean of women. Hailed as "a breath of fresh air," Mrs. Progressive—she was usually married—vowed to "replace suspicion with trust" and emanated waves of empathy, in contrast to Miss Traditional, who had all the give-and-take of Torquemada and emanated nothing except memos banning patent-leather shoes lest boys see up our dresses in the reflection.

Instead of summoning girls to her office like Miss Traditional, Mrs. Progressive came to us, strolling through pajama-clad throngs at slumber parties and encouraging intimate discussions on "Should you French kiss?" and "Is petting wrong?" Let a hand go up and she was beside the questioner like a shot, pouring on empathy like pancake syrup. Miss Traditional's only open reference to sexual desire was her memo about never letting a boy sit in a chair we had just vacated lest he feel our body heat, but Mrs. Progressive took pride in no-holds-barred girltalk and assured us that we could say anything we liked.

Well, yes and no. Despite her seeming spontaneity she somehow always managed to end discussions on her terms with one of her signature lines, her favorite being "If you love him, you *won't*." She could always work them in, and we got so we could tell when one was coming: Her wide crinkly smile grew crinklier, her head tossed gaily, and she winked. But if any girl tried to continue the discussion beyond the signature line, Mrs. Progressive's crinkly gaiety vanished, replaced by the blank-eyed stiffness of an actress who has lost her place.

That's what happened when she counseled me about running around with bohemians. This time her signature line was "Mr. Right is looking for you, too!" but I didn't take the hint.

"I don't want to get married. I'd rather live in Paris and have affairs like George Sand."

That did it. The back went up, the wall came down, and she set an Olympic uncrinkling record that stood until the media started asking E. Doli unscripted questions.

E. Doli's refusal while transportation secretary to believe anything bad about air bags or anything good about raising the 55 mph speed limit reminds me of the dream world inhabited by the North Carolina clubwomen I covered when I worked on the Raleigh paper. Sunk in an inferiority complex over the South's image as a cultural wasteland, they convinced themselves that it was a potential cultural mecca that could flower at any moment if only everyone else realized what they themselves already knew.

Their saving wisdom was supplied by the professors of history and classics who spoke at their luncheons, and went like this: Culture does not require big cities. Ancient Athens had a population of only 90,000, about the same as Raleigh's at this time. Therefore, Raleigh could become another Athens. The professors didn't believe it but they knew it was what the clubwomen wanted to hear. I didn't believe it because I could admit that Socrates and Plato were not wont to say "Les' git some beer an' go rustle up some nooky." But the clubwomen believed it and repeated it like a chant because it was such a nice belief.

AMERICA can't afford to elect E. Doli but the craven GOP will nominate her for veep unless her mask drops with a resounding crash, so I'm hoping she follows in the footsteps of Granny's friend, the "Side Lady."

She was a little old spinster with a vision problem who had to turn her head to the left to see properly. Timid and unworldly, she had been dominated by her father, who broke up the closest thing to a romance she ever had: a flirtation with a Richmond streetcar driver. She met him when she took his trolley to her music lesson and soon invented excuses to ride around all day with him, sitting directly behind him so they could talk. But Big Daddy found out about it and locked her in her room, and she never saw him again.

At 70 she had a stroke and lay unconscious in her hospital bed, head still turned to the left, attended by her minister and a brace of Confederate Daughters.

Suddenly, she stirred and tried to speak. Everyone gathered round the bed, each expecting to hear what he wanted to hear. The minister wanted transfiguration, the Daughters wanted a match for the famous deathbed apocrypha, "I'm going to see General Lee and Jesus," and Granny, who wholeheartedly believed that the Side Lady turned her head to the left in memory of the driver's side of the streetcar, wanted treacly sentiment.

"Say something, honey," she urged tenderly.

Whereupon the Side Lady opened her eyes, straightened her head for the first time in anyone's memory and said: "We gonna sit raht heeah till all you colored git back of that line!" **NR**

Miss King can be reached at P. O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22404.

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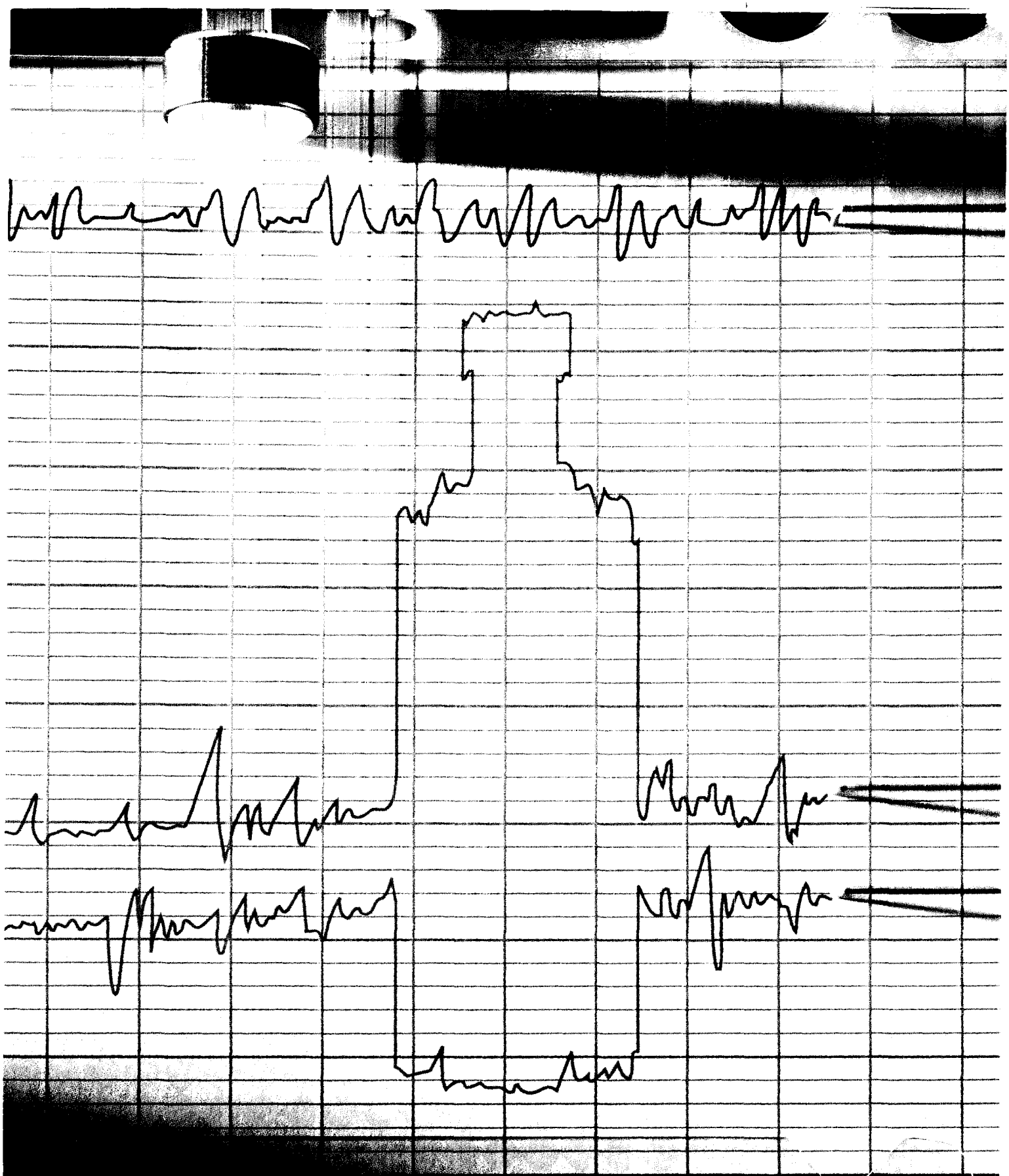

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